MONDAY
February 3, 2025

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RNI No. KARENG/1970/49945

Vol. 56 • No. 28

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Hon'ble Chief Minister
Mamata Banerjee

Steel

- Bengal is emerging as a hub of steel production
- West Bengal's steel products rank among the top 5 export commodities, amounting to ₹19,088 Crore
- Steel production grew 12% Year on Year in FY24, reaching 11 Million Tonnes from 9.83 Million Tonnes in FY23

Gems and Jewellery

- Leading jewellers like Tanishq, Malabar and Senco Gold produce jewellery in WBIDC Gems and Jewellery Park; many more top brands are manufacturing in various parts of Bengal
- Value of Bengal's jewellery exports totalled at ₹12,600 Crore. Total domestic production equalled at over ₹48,000 Crore

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FIRST STEP

U.K. to criminalise use of AI child abuse tools

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Beyond tax cuts, a closer read of the Union Budget

Many of the measures lack rounded strategies

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REIGN CONTINUES

India retains women's under-19 World Cup

SPORT » PAGE 17

Tax break will give a fillip to slowing economy: Centre

Advocating 'trust in the people's wisdom', Finance Secretary says taxpayers will help the economy by spending, saving, or investing the benefit; the economy requires all kinds of engines to be fired

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

> So it is a relief and it is also a policy choice that the government has exercised in order to see that this extra disposable income will come back to the economy and lift the spirits. This would enhance the weakening growth engines of demand and address the slowdown concern too
>
> **TUHIN KANTA PANDEY**
> Finance Secretary

The Centre's decision to slash the income tax payer's burden was aimed at addressing some "angst" that it had noticed in recent months as well as to give a fillip to the economy's weakening growth impulses with a broad-based boost to demand, savings, and investments, Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said here on Sunday.

"Normally, we say an investment multiplier is more than the consumption multiplier... But the state of economy that we have today, it requires all kinds of engines to be fired. Therefore, agnostic of that, I think we should really be trusting the people's wisdom, whatever they want to do. It will come back and the economy will get a boost," he said, adding that "distributing wealth increases wealth". The Centre will forgo ₹1 lakh crore by making annual incomes up to ₹12 lakh tax-free and rejigging tax slabs and rates.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

PM backed tax cuts, says Nirmala

NEW DELHI
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi backed the idea to cut taxes but it took time to convince the bureaucrats. » PAGE 13

State's draft law plans to ask people not to repay money taken from unlicensed MFIs

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

In a move to provide relief to the economically vulnerable groups, individuals/SHGs and small and marginal farmers, the State government has proposed to promulgate an Ordinance in a couple of days asking them not to repay the loans they borrowed from unlicensed and unregistered microfinance institutions (MFIs)

Almost finalised

A draft copy of the Karnataka Microfinance (Prevention of Coercive Actions) Ordinance, 2025, which was almost finalised after several rounds of meetings by the government, has proposed to provide relief to borrowers from coercive action by unlicensed and unregistered MFIs or money lending agencies/organisations.

Following a spate of suicides by borrowers of loans from largely unregistered MFIs, the Siddaramaiah government was under public pressure to enforce the new law to check undue hardship of usurious interest rates and coercive means of recovery by MFIs operating in the State. The draft Ordinance has clearly stated that "every loan, including the amount of interest, if any, payable by the borrower to MFIs which are unlicensed and unregistered shall be deemed to be wholly discharged".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 6

Salient features of the proposed Ordinance on MFIs

- Mandatory registration of MFIs with the government
- Registration for operation valid for a one-year period
- MFIs should issue loan cards to borrowers having all details
- Rate of interest charged by MFI should be displayed at all its offices
- All communications to the borrower should be in Kannada
- No police officer shall refuse to register a case for violation of norms
- Government can appoint an ombudsperson for settling disputes between the borrower and the lender
- Three-year imprisonment and a fine of ₹5 lakh for offences

NEARBY

State's electricity demand rises

BENGALURU
Months before summer sets in in Karnataka, the peak electricity demand in the State touched an all-time high on January 31 with 17,691 MW. This surpassed the earlier record of 17,220 MW in February 2024. » PAGE 3

CESCK likely to shift to Bengaluru

BENGALURU
The Union government plans to separate the Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Kannada (CESCK) from Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru, give it autonomy, and shift it to Bengaluru. » PAGE 6

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 9

Trump slaps tariffs on Canada, Mexico, China

Agence France-Presse
PALM BEACH

U.S. President Donald Trump announced broad tariffs on Saturday on trading partners Canada, Mexico and China, claiming a "major threat" from illegal immigration and drugs. The move sparked promises of retaliation. Canadian and Mexican exports will face a 25% tariff starting Tuesday, although energy resources from Canada will have a lower 10% levy.

Goods from China, which already face various rates of duties, will see an additional 10% tariff.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

'Budget's tariff tweaks will correct bad optics'

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The latest round of import tariff revisions announced in the Union Budget on Saturday has done away with the peak rates of 150%, 125%, and 100% which applied to just five items, but had created "bad optics" about the country's tariff structure, top government officials told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

Such high tariffs have led to criticism of the sort levelled by U.S. President Donald Trump, who has often clubbed India with China as a "tariff abuser".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

Over 260 from Myanmar seek shelter in Manipur

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

As civil war rages in Myanmar, security agencies are verifying the reports of death of a Manipuri youth in the neighbouring country and keeping a close watch on its impact on ethnic-strife-hit Manipur. From January 27, around 260 Myanmar refugees have taken shelter in India along the Moreh border in Manipur, a defence source said on Sunday.

Since January 9, amid air strikes by Myanmar military, refugees have been streaming into areas close to the Manipur border. Defence sources said around 100 foreigners had sought temporary refuge but eventually returned after the bombings stopped. "However, from January 27 to 29, when the fighting intensified in Myanmar, as many as 261 refugees arrived and are yet to return," said the source.

Officials said the news of deaths of Manipuri youth may be exaggerated as part of a propaganda to glorify insurgents. Last week, hundreds attended a funeral for a member of the banned People's Liberation Army in Imphal East.

PLA CADRE KILLED
» PAGE 12

High-risk, high-reward — India redefining T20's antithesis

Despite changes at the helm, the team has stayed loyal to its aggressive approach, and with Arshdeep and Suryakumar in the mix, the side's dominance bucks the format's nature of being unpredictable

EMMANUAL YOGINI

R. Kaushik

Of all the formats played internationally, the 20-over game is the least predictable and the biggest antithesis of consistency. Its very nature bridges the gulf between sides; one whirlwind knock, one manic over, sometimes one slice of brilliance in the field even, can irrevocably alter the outcome of a contest.

There are no overwhelming favourites going into a global tournament because this isn't a version that encourages or rewards favouritism. As early as in the inaugural T20 World Cup in South Africa in 2007, Zimbabwe stunned Australia, who eventually went on to make the semifinals. Two years later in England, Netherlands upset the applecart of the host nation and less than seven months back, unfancied and unheralded United States shocked 2010 champions Pakistan in a Super Over in Dallas.

Viewed against this backdrop, how does one classify India's spectacular unbeaten run in Twenty20 International series at home since February 2019? Following a 0-2 defeat to Australia, India have remained unbeaten in a staggering 17 series in their own backyard. Two of those showdowns, both against South Africa, ended in stalemates - 1-1 in September 2019 and 2-2 in June 2022. Otherwise, it has been India all the way, culminating in another series triumph in the ongoing clash against Jos Buttler's England.

Can one explain this uber dominant run that has bucked the vicissitudes of T20 over cricket? The simple and often convenient reason proffered is the influence of the Indian Premier League, and while that is undoubtedly a massive factor, it can't be the sole reason for such an unprecedented run of supreme authority driven by exceptional skillsets and enviable strength in depth.

Several of these series have been won, especially in the last two years, without many of the biggest names of modern-day Indian cricket.

Between the semifinal loss to England in the T20 World Cup in Adelaide in November 2022 and the home series against Afghanistan in January 2024, for instance, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli didn't play a single international game. Nor did Jasprit Bumrah, indisputably the best all-format bowler in the game. Numerous other players have missed out either due to injuries or form or because of the perceived need to blood younger, newer, more robust faces, yet India haven't been found wanting when it comes to both skill and temperament. It's as if India don't even contemplate the possibility of defeat, and in a game where defeat follows victory with the certainty of night following day, that is beyond comprehensible.

Altering perceptions

Let's first focus on the IPL, and the terrific impact it has had on the sport worldwide but specifically in India. The IPL has changed the dynamics of the 20-over game, it has altered the perception of the players, it has taken the fear factor out of the equation, it has exploded the fear of losing. Oftentimes, the fear of losing is more foreboding than losing itself. The IPL has emboldened emerging and aspiring Indian talent to shed self-doubt and adopt all-out aggression as their calling card, a development that owes itself to the consistent messaging that comes from the team management and the ownership group within the franchise set-up.

The T20 format has been played internationally for two decades now and it has taken teams time to get used to its various pulls and pressures and demands and requirements. Like any concept new, it didn't find universal favour - remember that India were all but pressurized into sending a team to the maiden World Cup - but now it has come to occupy such a pre-eminent place in the cricketing landscape that it has forced the authorities to look closely at what the potentially debilitating effects of the format could be if it is allowed to grow unchecked.

India took more time than most to wake up to the possibilities that exist within the ambit of the 20-over format. For the longest of time, India were conservative and unhurried, taking a 50-over approach to a game that was less than half the duration of the longer limited-overs variant. There was a distinct slant towards keeping wickets in hand and therefore not taking the proportionate risks that would allow the maximum exploitation of the field restrictions in the first six PowerPlay overs. While the rest of the world invested in power and explosiveness, India were content to set their own pace, often to their detriment. After their surprise triumph in South Africa, India seldom made a serious pitch for top honours in the World Cup. Their only final appearance after 2007 was in Bangladesh in 2014, when they were well beaten in the title round by Sri Lanka. They failed to advance beyond the semifinals of two of the next three editions - at home in 2016 and in Australia in 2022 - and were eliminated in the first stage in 2021. The IPL, it seemed, had done little to elevate India's standing as a T20 unit.

Seminal moment

Despite their monstrous unbeaten charge at home from 2019, it wasn't until the end of 2021 that India truly grew fangs. Defeats to Pakistan and New Zealand in the UAE in October 2021, which sparked their first-stage exit from the World Cup, was a wake-up call India heeded with the urgency and commitment that were the need of the hour. The ten-wicket loss to England in the semifinal of the following edition is often, but wrongly, hailed as the catalyst for change. If anything, it was the disappointment in the desert sands of Dubai that was the seminal turning point.

At the end of that tournament, Rohit replaced Kohli as the captain and Rahul Dravid took over as head coach from Ravi Shastri. By then, Rohit had led the team sporadically in Kohli's absence and Dravid had taken the team on one tour of Sri Lanka in the middle of 2021 when the Test team was in England. The coming together of the dasher from Mumbai and the more stately technician from Bengaluru was a significant development that was to culminate in India's terrific run to the T20 World Cup title in the USA and the Caribbean in June 2024.

Rohit and Dravid understood that there was no point in paying lip service to aggression and going back on that commitment if the odd result didn't go their way. India drastically altered their approach and attitude to 20-over cricket, with the captain taking the lead role in espousing the brand of cricket he wanted his side to portray.

Rohit is a celebrated century-maker in white-ball internationals but when he became the captain, he put those individual aspirations on the backburner and took it upon himself to set the tone at the start of each innings. It compelled the others around him to follow suit because there is no greater inspiration than watching the leader put his money where his mouth is.

Like England had after their first-round exit in the 2015 50-over World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, India cast their net far and wide, identifying the resources they felt would fit into their new-found T20 philosophy. The IPL was the obvious and most visible hunting ground for the selection panel, and there was no longer any hesitancy in fast-tracking 'special' talent. Players were given confidence and security, allowed to express themselves without the threat of a sword hanging overhead if they failed in trying to follow team plans. The atmosphere was so healthy and convivial that the thought of failure wasn't even in the deep recesses of anyone's thinking.

It helped that through the system emerged Suryakumar Yadav and Arshdeep Singh, two key players in India's behemothian charge towards the top. Suryakumar has hit a trough in the last few months but for a couple of years before that, he was the most feared T20 batter, with his 360-degree stroke-making propensity and his penchant for making the most risky stroke appear the most straightforward with supreme nonchalance.

Arshdeep is nearly the bowling equivalent of Suryakumar, less glamorous than the celebrated stroke-maker but no less crucial, given that within two and a half years of his international debut, he is already the country's leading wicket-taker in T20s.

Around these two white-ball specialists - in Suryakumar's case, the ambit is even narrower, a T20 specialist - India have unearthed and unleashed numerous other custom-made resources with bat and with ball, their roles clearly delineated so that there is no confusion about what the requirements are. Muscular ball-strikers, wicket-taking wrist-spinners and mystery spinners, and fast bowlers adept at bowling at the death have been strung together with care and precision and patience and with a clear method to a certain degree of madness. The uncompromising demands on fitness and fielding have played their part and India are now a side which is clearly far more dangerous than the sum of its multifarious gifted parts.

Changes in leadership - in the last five-plus years, among those who have captained the side apart from Kohli and Rohit are K.L. Rahul, Suryakumar, Hardik Pandya, Bumrah, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill and Ruturaj Gaikwad - and from a coaching perspective didn't manifest in changed styles and approaches. Shastri, Dravid, V.V.S. Laxman (in a stand-in capacity more than once) and now Gautam Gambhir have stressed the significance of staying true to the mantra of aggression and positivity while being mindful of the thin line between carefree and careless.

Amid the spectacular run at home, India's away record can't be overlooked either - in the last seven months after their grand World Cup triumph, they have won 4-1 in Zimbabwe, 3-0 in Sri Lanka and 3-1 in South Africa - which points to an extraordinary T20 outfit that has cocked a snook at convention and shown that even with a high-risk approach, the prospects of high reward are all too genuine and tangible.

THE GIST

- India took more time than most to wake up to the possibilities that exist within the ambit of the 20-over format
- The 10-wicket loss to England in the semifinal of the 2022 T20 World Cup is often, but wrongly, hailed as the catalyst for change. If anything, it was the disappointment in the desert sands of Dubai that was the seminal turning point
- It helped that through the system emerged Suryakumar and Arshdeep, two key players in India's behemothian charge towards the top

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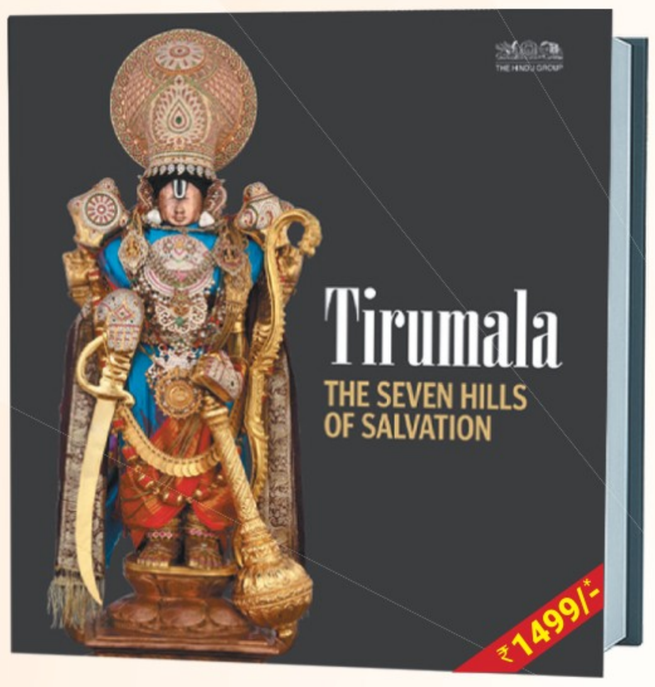

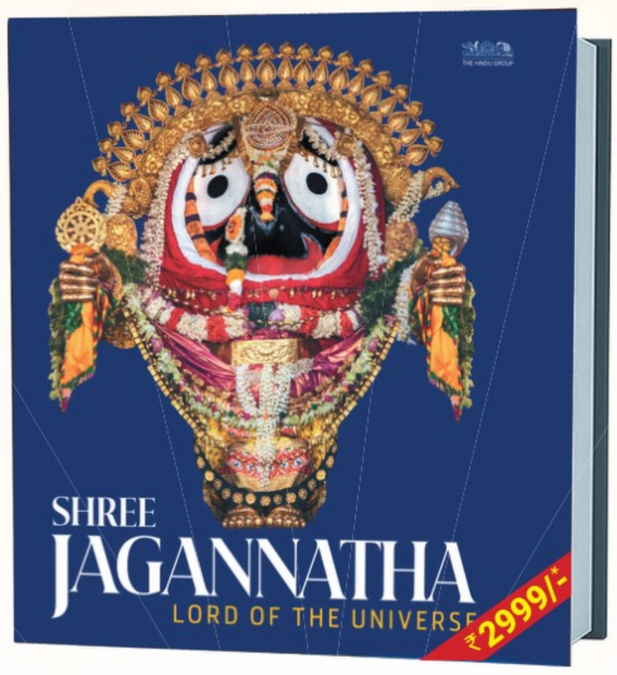

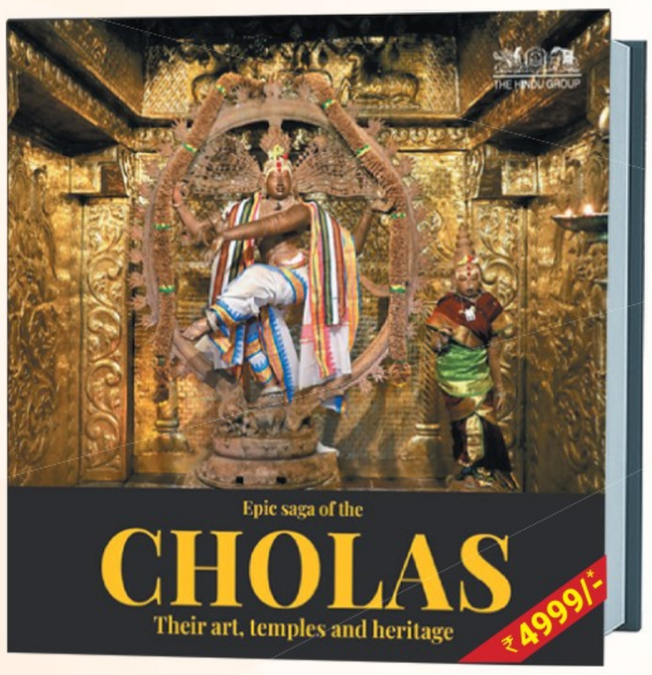

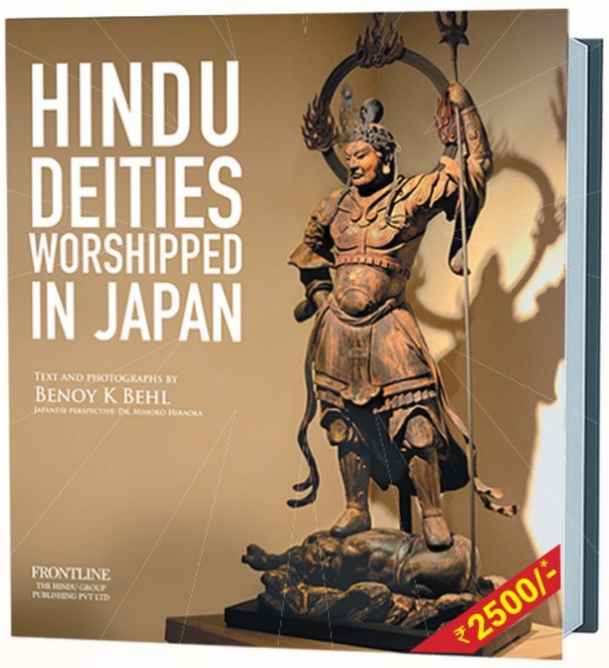

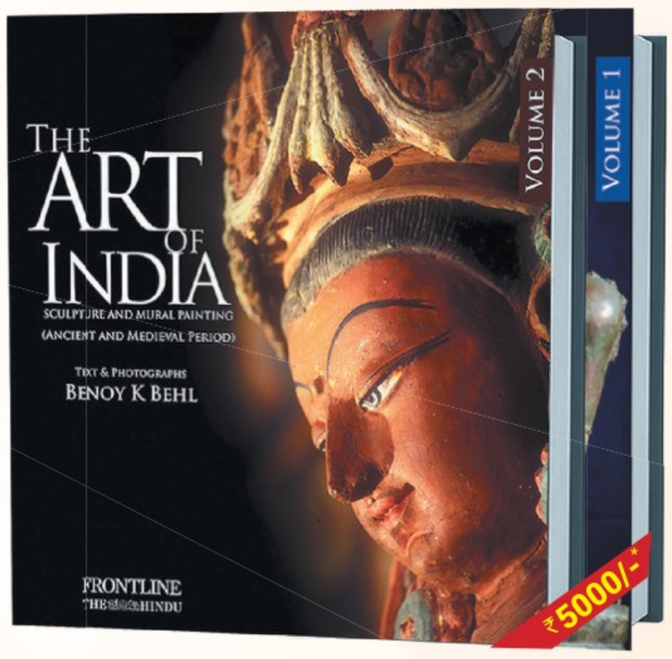

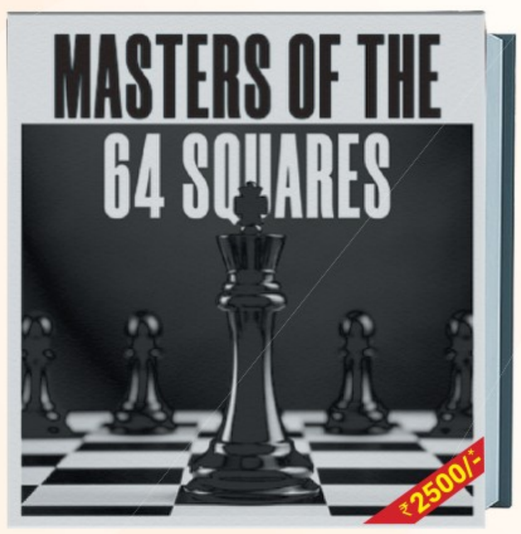

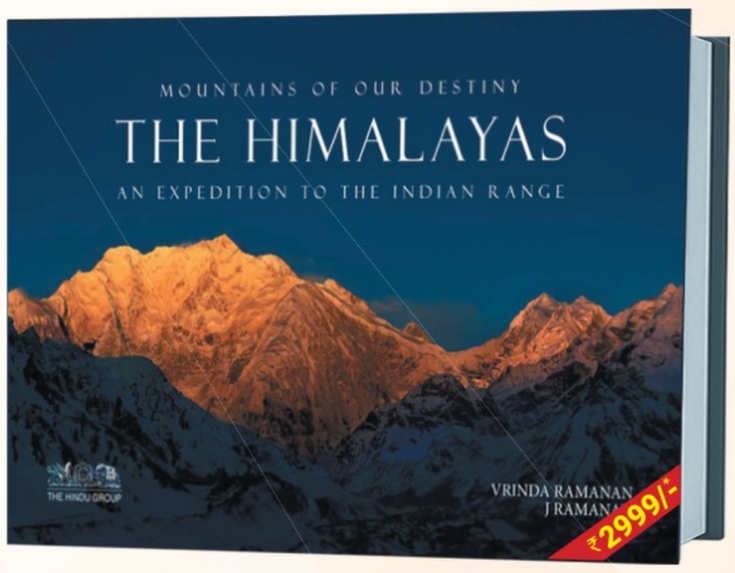

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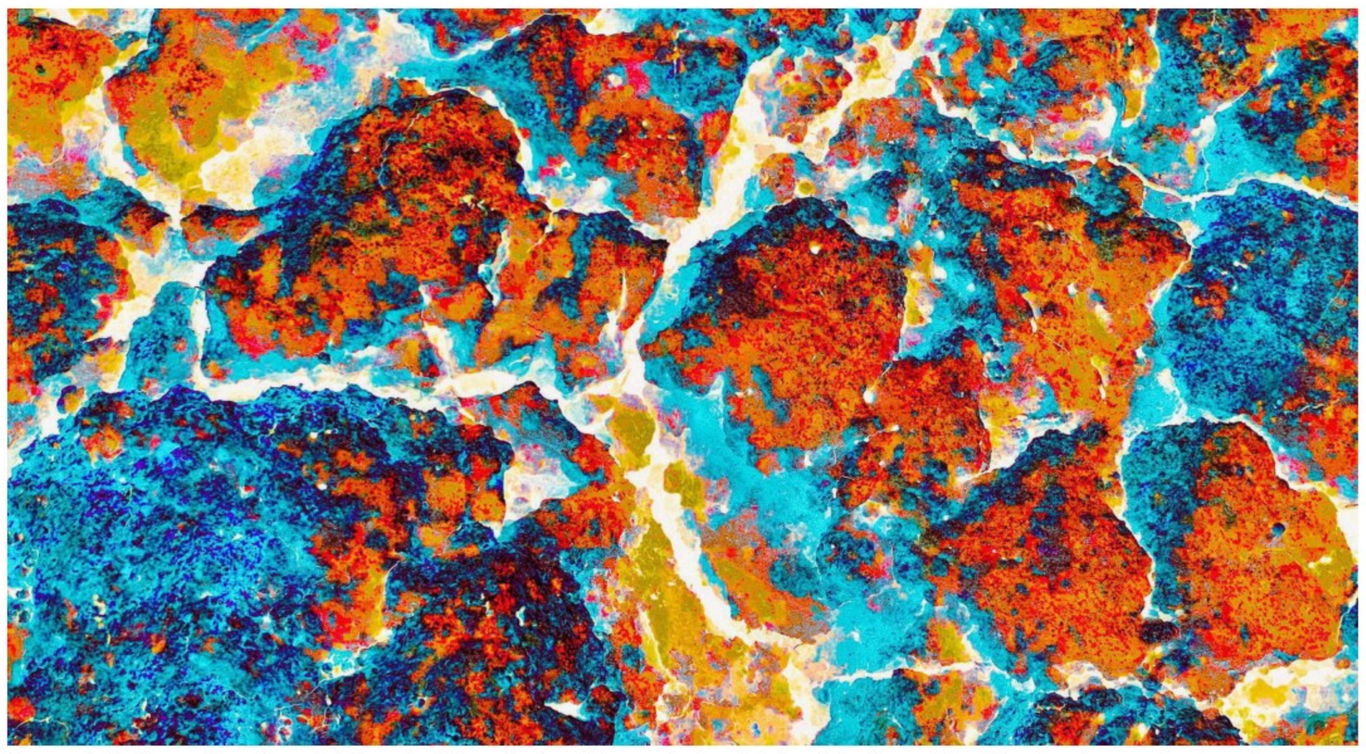
Study finds a way to predict when cracks would develop in paint, clay, milk, blood

Ph.D. student Vaibhav Parmar and professor Ranjini Bandyopadhyay of the Soft Condensed Matter group at RRI Bengaluru examined how the elasticity of clay changed as it dried, slowly changing from a flowing liquid to a soft solid to a brittle sheet, in the process uncovering a link between the elasticity of clay and crack onset time

Unnati Ashar



Representative image of cracking paint. One potential application of the new findings is in the study of how old paintings have been restored over time. EUGENE GOLOVESOV

THE GIST

Researchers have found that they can predict when cracks appear based on the initial thickness of a colloid sample and its elasticity. Using this, they were able to delay the onset of cracks by mixing additivesin the colloid

Clay, milk, blood, and paint are colloids. Researchers said these findings could be applied to all colloids beset by cracks. Any change in red blood characteristics will change crack patterns on a substrate after a drop of blood has dried

Paint on a building undergoes changes in temperature and humidity daily. Researchers intend to perform experiments in which they vary these parameters and study how the formation of cracks changes accordingly

Cracks in paint coatings could soon become a thing of the past. In a new study, researchers from the Raman Research Institute (RRI) in Bengaluru have found a way to delay the onset of cracks after studying them in great detail.

As playful as this sounds, the technique has potential applications in diagnosing diseases and checking whether food has spoiled.

In general, cracks are ubiquitous, even a part of life. They adorn old flower vases, the outer surfaces of buildings that have suffered both hot summers and chill winters, streams of cooling lava, the ground when it has become sapped of moisture, even the scaly heads of reptiles like crocodiles. But how often do we stop and take a closer look?

Cracks may appear simple but they're formed as the result of a complex phenomenon. In older studies, scientists have found that new cracks always meet an older one at 90° – except in a very thin layer of drying paint, where they prefer an angle of 120° instead. Perhaps you'd like to pick up a magnifying glass, a protractor, and go take a look.

From clay to chicken nuggets

In the new study, researchers Vaibhav Parmar, a PhD student, and professor Ranjini Bandyopadhyay of the Soft Condensed Matter group at RRI examined how the elasticity of clay changed as it dried, slowly changing from a flowing liquid to a thick yet soft solid to a brittle sheet. A more elastic solid will more readily return to its original shape after it is distorted in some way.

The duo discovered a relationship between the elasticity of clay and how quickly cracks emerged in it. Using this relationship, they concluded that they could predict when cracks would develop based on the initial thickness of the sample and its elasticity. The beauty of an equation is if its left-hand side equals its right-hand side, the reverse is true as well. That is, the researchers found they could delay the onset of cracks by tuning the elasticity. They were able to do the latter by mixing different additives into the clay.

When it was common salt, the cracks emerged faster than when they added a food additive called tetrasodium pyrophosphate (TSPP). TSPP is found in foodstuffs like chicken nuggets, marshmallows, and meat and egg alternatives, and as a thickening agent in toothpastes. Indeed, the duo hit a eureka moment when TSPP was found to significantly delay the birth of cracks in clay. Their findings were published in a paper in the journal *Physics of Fluids* in November 2024.

Here a crack, there a crack

An immediate application of their findings is a way to make paint coatings resistant to cracks. Manufacturers generally add clay to their paints and coating liquids to give them a thicker consistency. The new study suggests they can improve their products' crack-resistance by adding clay of a certain elasticity to the liquid at the time of their manufacture itself.

In fact, the findings could apply almost anywhere that cracks make an appearance.

"Just like clay, milk and blood are made of tiny particles in a liquid, and they behave in similar ways when they dry," Kirti Chandra Sahu, a professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering at IIT Hyderabad, said. "The same principles about how cracks form could help study drying patterns in these materials. For example, crack patterns could reveal structural changes in protein networks, like in milk or clot formation in blood."

Clay, milk, blood, and paint are all colloids: a mixture in which small insoluble particles of one type are dispersed in a liquid of another type. Sahu, who wasn't involved in the RRI study, asserted that its findings could be applied to all colloids beset by cracks.

> This research advances our understanding by linking the internal structure, mechanical properties, and cracking behaviour of ageing colloidal materials

"Adulterants might affect the milk's properties, creating unique drying patterns or crack formations. The study's approach could help identify [the] changes by comparing the drying patterns of pure and adulterated milk," he said. "It's a smart and straightforward method to test milk quality."

"Blood from patients with conditions like anaemia ... displays distinct differences in red blood cell count, shape, and rigidity compared to the blood of healthy individuals," Bandyopadhyay, one of the study's coauthors, said. "Any change in red blood cell characteristics will change the crack patterns left behind on a substrate after a drop of blood has dried completely."

'Significant potential'

She added that a machine-learning model that has been taught to distinguish between various crack patterns in dried blood could also discriminate between the blood of a person before and after intense exercise "with 95% accuracy."

Yet another potential application of the findings is in the study of how old paintings have been restored over time. Like drying clay, such paintings develop a network of fine cracks over time called the craquelure. By understanding how environmental and mechanical factors affect the craquelure, experts could better conserve valuable works of art.

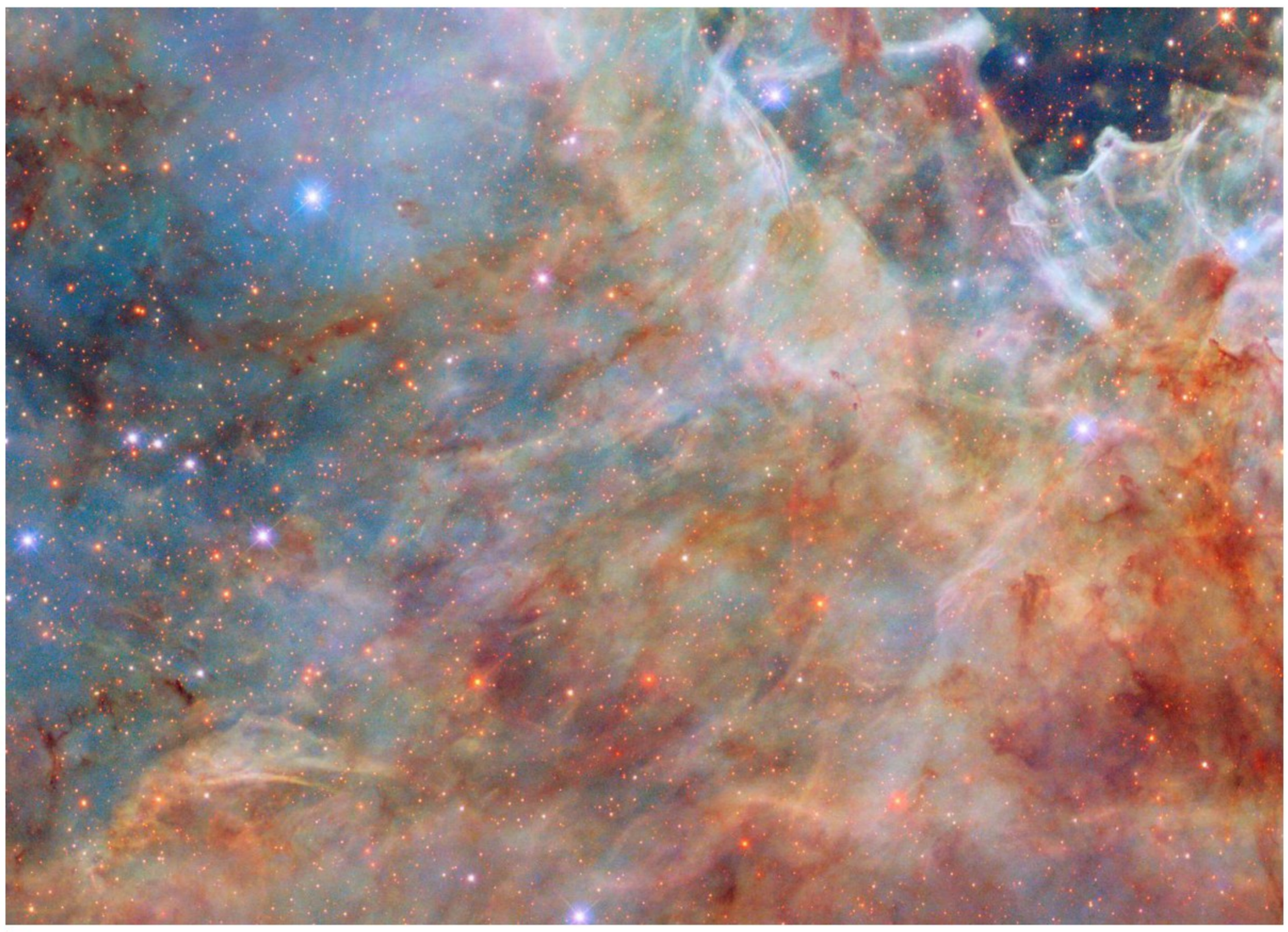
With so many applications, Sahu said the study seems to deepen our understanding of material properties. "This research advances our understanding by linking the internal structure, mechanical properties, and cracking behaviour of ageing colloidal materials," he said, adding that the findings "have significant potential for ... enhancing our understanding of the behaviour of soft materials."

The duo at RRI also has more work planned. The paint applied on a building undergoes significant changes in temperature and humidity every day. The researchers intend to perform controlled experiments in which they vary these parameters and study how the formation of cracks changes accordingly.

"We [also] want to confirm the validity of the proposed relationship experimentally in other materials, such as in cornstarch, toothpaste and ketchup," Bandyopadhyay said.

(Unnati Ashar is a freelance journalist. (unnati_a@ymail.com))

BIG SHOT



This January 24 Hubble Space Telescope image features a sparkling scene from the outskirts of the Tarantula Nebula, about 160,000 light years away. At its centre, this nebula hosts massive stars weighing roughly 200-times the sun. The scene here features serene blue gas, brownish-orange dust patches, and a sprinkling of multi-coloured stars. NASA/ESA

WHAT IS IT?

Small modular reactors: pocket N-plants

The Hindu Bureau

A billet of enriched uranium. Many SMR designs require the use of high-assay low-enriched uranium (HALEU), enriched to 5-20%, as nuclear fuel. PUBLIC DOMAIN

In her 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 budget speeches, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman emphasised contributions from nuclear power for India to meet its renewable energy targets.

A new mode of nuclear power generation soon expected to enter this mix is small modular reactors (SMRs). SMRs are reactors designed to be smaller, more flexible, and easier to build than traditional nuclear setups. Each SMR will produce less than 300 MW of power.

(Scientists are also exploring an even smaller design, called microreactors, to produce 1-20 MW of nuclear power each.)

The larger a conventional nuclear power facility, the more commercially viable it will be; SMRs aim to buck this trend by being cheaper to build and safeguard. Its proponents say different parts of an SMR can be machined separately, then assembled in a factory and transported to the site rather than having to be built on site.

A reactor with such a design can also be scaled up more easily than a conventional reactor.

SMRs have some downsides, too. For one, they are still experimental and need considerable capital investments without a guarantee that they will be profitable.

For another, the first generation of SMR designs require low-grade uranium as nuclear fuel to operate and thus will need to be refuelled more often, which is not desirable.

In this year's budget speech, Ms. Sitharaman announced a new 'Nuclear Energy Mission' with a ₹20,000 crore outlay to study SMRs and operationalise five indigenous units by 2033.

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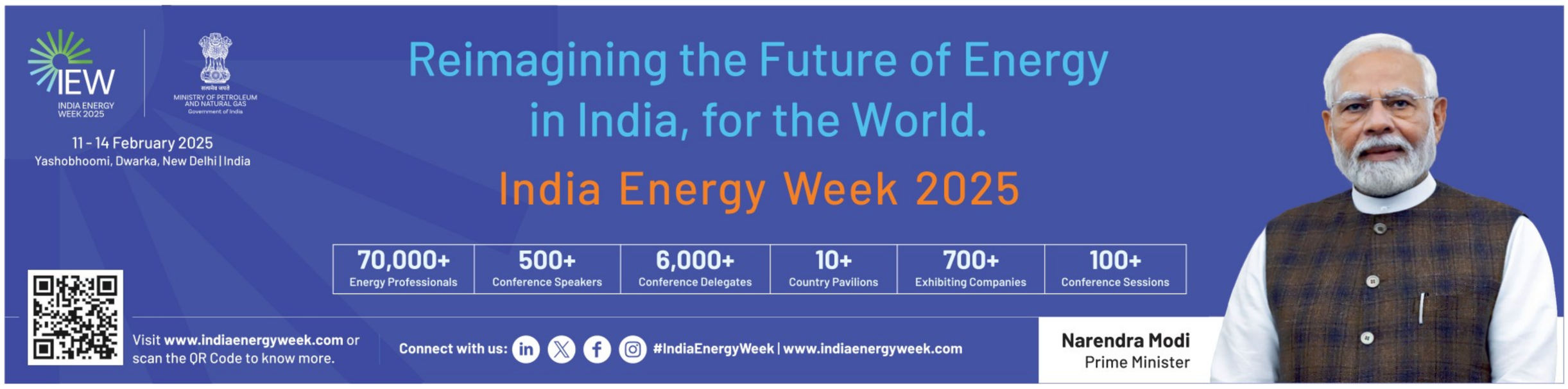

Habitual offender arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Chandra Layout Police have arrested a habitual offender and recovered eight mobile phones worth ₹1.27 lakh from him.

The accused roped in a juvenile to snatch phones while riding pillion, targeting people walking alone, while he drove around on a scooter.

Using the same modus operandi, the accused had snatched a mobile phone from a man who was on his morning walk in August 2024.

Based on the complaint by the victim, the police analysed several CCTV camera footage before zeroing in on the juvenile. He was taken into custody from his house in Padarayanapura.

The juvenile was taken into custody for questioning, who confessed on the habitual offender leading to his arrest and recovery of the robbed items.

Warmer winter drives electricity demand in State up to record high

In January 2024, the peak demand was 15,668 MW, around 2,000 MW lower than this year

Jahnavi T.R.
BENGALURU

Months before summer begins in Karnataka, the peak electricity demand in the State touched an all-time high on January 31 with 17,691 Megawatts (MW). This surpassed the earlier record of 17,220 MW recorded in February 2024.

According to the data provided by the Power Company of Karnataka Ltd. (PCKL), in the month of January, 2024, the peak demand was 15,668 MW while the consumption was 294.01 Million Units (MU). This year, the consumption was 314.89 MU on January 31.

"We just had a warm winter and in the month of January itself, people started using more fans and air conditioner systems which would usually start by February or March. Additionally, there has been an increase in sowing across the State by around 20% to 30% as there was good rainfall earlier this year and hence, it has driven up the agricultural load in rural areas. Hence, the demand was up by 2,000 MW this year in January," a senior Energy Department official told *The Hindu*.

Energy Minister K.J. George has declared that there will be no load shedding this year regardless of demand. FILE PHOTO

The official also said that by March this year, the demand is expected to touch 18,300 MW while by April (peak summer), it will touch 19,000 MW.

Able to manage demand

Speaking at an event in January last week, Energy Minister K.J. George had said, "The demand for power is around 17,500 MW this year and we have made all arrangements to cater to this demand. With the installation of solar pump sets under PM KUSUM - B and solarisation of feeders under KUSUM - C for agricultural supply, we are able to manage the demand."

Mr. George had also declared that there will be no load shedding this year regardless of the demand. "We did not do load shedding previously when there was drought. This time, the reservoirs are all filled and water storage is good. If needed, we will have power swapping agreements with other states and supply power," the Minister said.

If you have felt that the last week of January was warmer than the rest of the month in Bengaluru, then you are right. According to India Meteorological Department (IMD), Bengaluru, the temperature hit 32 to 33 degrees Celsius in the last few days of January in the city.

Warm winter this year

"In general, the winter has been warmer and drier this year. In January, the temperature was around 2 to 3 degrees above normal. The easterly winds dominated, and the northerly cold and dry winds did not penetrate the Indian region. South India especially had a warm winter this time," said C.S. Patil, scientist and director, IMD, Bengaluru.

For the next week, warmer conditions are expected to continue in the city. "Although we do not have an accurate prediction yet for the period after that, whenever it is too warm, it will rain and the city cools down. That could happen this time too," Mr. Patil added.

Citizens' group comes out against UGC draft regulations

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

It argues that though education is on the Concurrent List, these amendments seek to strip States of their rights

The Jagruta Nagarikaru Karnataka Vedike on Sunday condemned and rejected the Draft Regulations (2025) proposed by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

"Many states in the country unanimously rejected the NEP, as it was detrimental to the fundamental values of unity and democracy embedded in our Constitution. Our State also rejected the NEP and formed a State Education Policy Commission to draft a state-specific education policy," the members said.

"Now, based on this unconstitutional, undemocratic, and anti-people policy, the UGC has proposed its draft regulations (2025) for discussion. These draft regulations, based on a policy that the people of the country have already rejected, represent a major political maneuver to reintroduce the rejected National Policy through the back door, targeting state governments," they added.

They also said that even though education is on the Concurrent List, these amendments seek to strip States of their rights, diminishing the autonomy of universities and thus, they reject it.

"We strongly urge that at the meeting of the Education Ministers of Southern India to be held in Bangalore on February 5, 2025, a unanimous resolution be passed to categorically reject these draft regulations," they said.

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Budget for children as a share of the overall Union Budget

2.29 In per cent. The Union Budget 2025-26 has allocated ₹1,16,132.5 crore for children, marking a 5.65% increase from the previous year's ₹1,09,920.95 crore, but child rights bodies have expressed concerns over "reduced allocations for crucial programmes". PTI

Delegates who participated in IAPC health conference

800 A three-day international conference of the Indian Association of Palliative Care (IAPC) concluded, with over 800 delegate doctors and volunteers from across the globe participating in one of the largest health events in Jammu and Kashmir. PTI

The share of backward classes in Telangana's population

46.25 In per cent. Backward classes, other than Muslim minorities, form the largest chunk of the 3.7 crore population of Telangana, according to the caste survey conducted in the State. This is followed by the Scheduled Castes at 17.43%. PTI

Number of smart anganwadis to be inaugurated in Kerala

30 Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will inaugurate 30 new smart anganwadis equipped with state-of-the-art facilities. State Health Minister Veena George stated that approval has been granted for constructing 189 smart anganwadis, of which 89 have already been opened. PTI

Allocations for Lok Sabha in the latest Budget

903 In ₹ crore. Lok Sabha has been allocated ₹903 crore, more than double the amount given to the Rajya Sabha. A sizeable allocation — ₹558.81 crore of the total ₹ 903 crore — has been assigned to Lok Sabha Secretariat. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On live-in relationships in Uttarakhand

What has Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code mandated with respect to the registration of live-in relationships? Should the parents of the individuals be notified by the registrar? How do landlords come into the picture? Are there penalties for concealing the relationship? What about privacy?

EXPLAINER

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code passed by the State Assembly in February 2024, mandates the registration of live-in relationships both at their commencement and termination. This requirement applies not only to residents of Uttarakhand but also to individuals residing elsewhere in India. The rules, which came into effect on January 27, 2025, impose extensive documentation requirements for such registrations. "Requiring individuals in a live-in relationship to register with the government constitutes a gross violation of the right to privacy enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. It also contravenes the nine-judge Bench decision in *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy versus Union of India*, which affirmed that the right to privacy encompasses both informational privacy and decisional autonomy. There can be no disproportionate intrusion by the state into the private realm of an individual," Alok Prasanna Kumar, co-founder of Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy told *The Hindu*.

What is the registration process?

Under the code, only unmarried, heterosexual couples can enter into live-in relationships. Couples currently in a live-in relationship or intending to enter one can register through the newly launched online portal. For offline registration, they have to submit a 16-page form along with supporting documents to the concerned registrar. As stipulated in Rule 15(3)(e), applicants are required to submit an extensive set of documents for registration such as their photographs, their income tax Permanent Account Number (PAN), their Aadhaar linked to their phone number, and proof of residence or domicile within the State.

If either partner is between the ages of 18 and 21, they must provide the Aadhaar-linked phone number and address of each of their parents or legal guardians. The registrar is legally obligated to notify the guardians regarding the registration of the relationship, as well as its termination.

Sweeping legislation: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami during an event to announce the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. PTI

Is relationship history relevant?

A distinctive feature of the rules is their attempt to equate live-in relationships with the status of marriage. If a couple falls within the "degrees of prohibited relationships" as outlined in Schedule 1 – meaning they are related by blood – they must obtain approval from a religious or community leader certifying their eligibility to marry. The term "degrees of prohibited relationships" is derived from the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, which forbids marriages between individuals who are lineally or consanguinely related, unless such unions are permitted by local customs. Couples are also required to furnish proof of any prior relationships, particularly if they have previously been in a live-in relationship. Further, they are required to disclose their current status – whether single, married, divorced, annulled, separated, or widowed.

What about housing?

If the partners are already living together, they must provide proof of their shared household, such as the most recent electricity or water bill. If they reside in rented accommodation, they must also submit the landlord's full name, contact number, and a copy of the rent agreement. The registrar is obligated to contact the landlord while verifying the application details. If the partners are not yet living together, they must apply for a provisional certificate. Upon receiving such a certificate, the couple must secure accommodation within 30 days, with a possible 15-day extension. They must then apply for final registration, providing proof of their new premises.

The rules also impose specific obligations on landlords. When leasing property to a live-in couple, landlords must request either a provisional or final registration certificate, which will be incorporated into the rent agreement. Failure to comply will result in a penalty.

Will there be penalties?

Under the rules, the registrar is empowered to conduct a summary inquiry to verify the authenticity of submitted documents and ensure that the relationship was not established through coercion, undue influence, misrepresentation, or fraud.

Failure to register a live-in relationship within a month may result in both civil and criminal penalties. Upon conviction, a magistrate may impose a jail term of up to three months, a fine of up to ₹10,000, or both. Providing false information or concealing details carries a stricter penalty – imprisonment of up to three months, a fine of up to ₹25,000, or both. The registrar, either acting *suo motu* or upon receiving a complaint regarding non-registration, can issue a notice directing compliance. False complaints may attract a fine, with repeat offenders facing a higher penalty.

What have experts said?

According to Apar Gupta, advocate and co-founder of the Internet Freedom Foundation, the rules allow third-party disclosures of personal data without sufficient safeguards. "This will lead to large-scale social surveillance of relationships, which appears to be the intended consequence of the legislation," he said. "There are no penalties for third parties in cases of data leaks, which is particularly concerning since the exposure of personal information can pose real-world threats. This is likely to disproportionately affect interfaith and inter-caste couples," Mr. Gupta added.

THE GIST

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The legal systems under which citizenship is acquired

What are the two different principles which govern citizenship laws in various countries? What was the system in the U.S.? How are India's citizenship laws different?

Rangarajan. R

The story so far:

U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order stating that U.S. citizenship will be granted in the future only to children with parents holding U.S. citizenship or a U.S. green card.

What are the legal principles?

Citizenship is defined as full and equal membership of a country. In the words of Hannah Arendt, citizenship is the 'right to have rights'. There are two important legal systems based on which citizenship is acquired in various countries. One of them is 'jus soli' which means 'right of soil.' Under this principle, a child's citizenship is determined by his or her place of birth irrespective of the citizenship of their parents. Many North American and Latin American countries like Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina etc., follow this principle while granting citizenship for children born within their country. The other is 'jus sanguinis' which means 'right of blood.' Under this principle, a child's citizenship is determined by the citizenship of parents. Many African, European and Asian countries like Egypt, South Africa, Germany, India etc., follow this principle.

What is the current issue in the U.S.?

The U.S. has practised the grant of citizenship based on the 'jus soli' principle. The 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, adopted in 1868, states that 'all persons born or naturalised in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States.' The U.S. Supreme Court in 1898 reaffirmed that the 14th amendment extended to all children born in the U.S., irrespective of the parents' citizenship. The current executive order issued by President Trump titled 'Protecting the meaning and value of American citizenship' decrees that American citizenship would be granted only to children with parents holding U.S. Citizenship or a U.S. Green card. This order is to be implemented from February 19. However, a federal court in the State of Washington has temporarily stayed the order stating that it is 'blatantly unconstitutional.'

What about citizenship in India?

Citizenship in India is governed by the Citizenship Act, 1955. Till June 1987, India followed the 'jus soli' principle granting automatic citizenship to anyone born in India. Subsequently, the law was amended to introduce the 'jus sanguinis' principle. Between July 1987 and December 2004, it was required that either of the parents of a child born in India was a citizen of India for granting citizenship. Since December 2004, the requirement was further restricted wherein both the parents had to be citizens or one parent is a citizen and the other not an illegal immigrant. This was primarily to restrict citizenship to children born to illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. The Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA) provides accelerated citizenship to Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and Parsis from neighbouring countries of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who have entered India before December 31, 2014. India has differentiated on the basis of religion, by excluding Muslims, for grant of accelerated citizenship for the first time through CAA, 2019. Critics argue that this is against the basic structure of secularism under the Indian Constitution. The argument made by the government is that it is only to grant accelerated citizenship to religious minorities of these three neighbouring countries who have migrated to India owing to religious persecution in these countries and hence not discriminatory. The Supreme Court will decide on the constitutional validity of this law. Meanwhile, the government should ensure that implementation of this law does not create undue hardships for Muslim citizens.

Rangarajan. R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

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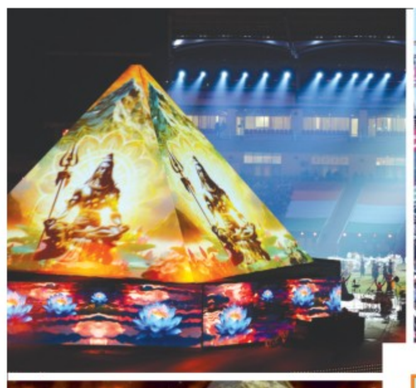

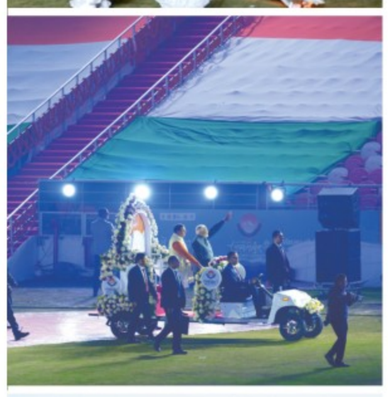

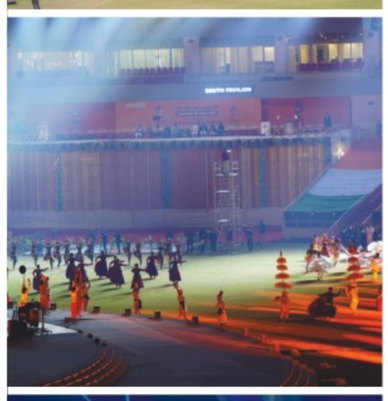

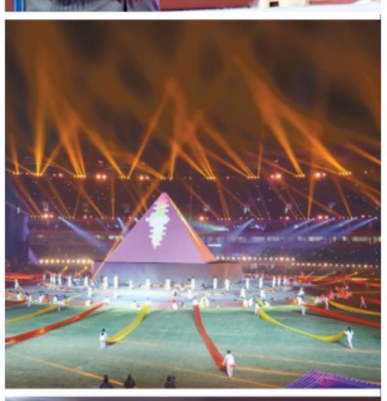
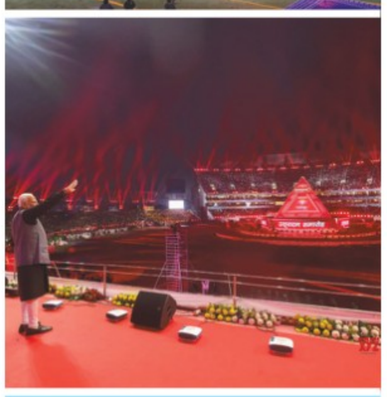
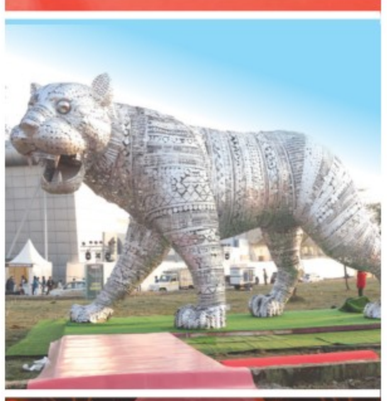
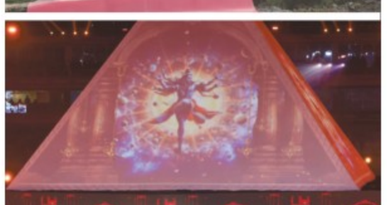
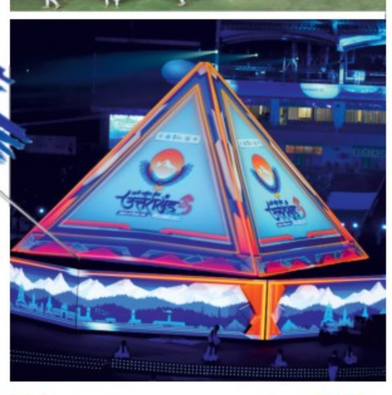

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Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

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Prime Minister

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GETTY IMAGES

The various challenges associated with AI-driven genetic testing

As genetic information can be processed faster with Artificial Intelligence (AI), the amount of personal data going under the scanner to be analysed has also increased. This, in turn, increases the potential of plausible data security risks and leaks

Poulomi Chatterjee

The Human Genome Project, launched in 1990 and concluded in 2003, enabled the documentation and analysis of the building blocks of human DNA, revealing patterns that could indicate the likelihood of developing rare diseases or carrying genetic abnormalities. Initially, predictive tests were limited to exceptional cases due to their high cost. For instance, expecting mothers could undergo tests to detect fetal cells with chromosomal defects potentially associated with Down's Syndrome or cancer patients could have their tumours examined to determine the most effective treatment options.

How has AI changed genomics?

As genetic information can be processed faster with Artificial Intelligence (AI), the amount of data going under the scanner has also increased.

In March 2024, John Hopkins University researchers revealed how genetic code sequences, which were previously ignored, were found to be associated with tumours. Using machine learning techniques, they were able to analyse more than 1,200 distinct types of "junk DNA" elements from tumours to deepen research around new therapies, new diagnostics and new screening methods for cancer.

Bootstrapped healthcare startup, Gene Box, leverages AI primarily to process vast amounts of genetic data swiftly and accurately, uncovering patterns and insights that would be nearly impossible to identify manually.

Their AI-driven algorithm helps predict genetic predispositions, interpret complex gene-environment interactions, and provide personalised recommendations based on individual genetic profiles. Moreover, their systems are designed to incorporate inputs from published, highly rated scientific evidence.

"By continuously updating our models with the latest research findings, we ensure that our analyses are not only accurate but also grounded in the most current and reliable scientific knowledge," said Mr. Pranav Anam, founder, and CEO of the healthcare startup.

What are the potential pitfalls?

When it comes to predicting whether a child will get through an elite school or how likely is she in landing a high-paying job, these testing tools can hardly offer a straightforward answer. "These aren't as simple as a 'yes' or 'no' question. It is a well-known fact that genetics is only 30% of the contributing factor," Mr. Anam said.

There are other caveats. For instance, a diagnosis could change in the future or may not present the full picture, often falling under the grey zone of significance. "These are known as 'variations of unknown significance.' Sometimes, other members of the family could be required to be tested to draw conclusive results," said Ms. Gayatri Iyer, a scientist at the Tata Institute for Genetics and Society.

For example, research has linked about 80 genes to Alzheimer's. While genetic testing can identify the risky genes, that doesn't mean the patient is bound to get it. The tests simply assess the genetic risk by identifying certain genetic variations that are associated with Alzheimer's. Consequently, a patient can also develop Alzheimer's without having any of the associated genes. "There are a bunch of questions we need to deal with. What if the tests found something that the patient wasn't looking for at all? How do you handle predictions of mental health diseases," Ms. Iyer noted.

"When dealing with sensitive cases, such as determining genetic predispositions for conditions like depression or heart disease, we adhere to strict ethical guidelines," Mr. Anam said. "Our goal is to provide insights that can guide proactive health measures, not to make definitive diagnoses."

Apart from genes, factors like environment, diet and schooling play equally important roles in a child's development.

Why should users remain cautious?

Nucleus, a genetic testing startup founded in 2020 by 23-year-old college dropout Kian Sadeghi has promised to analyse cancer, depression, longevity, or how extroverted a person might be, among many other diseases and traits, better than any other firm of its kind. The startup received $14 million in funding from some of the most eminent names in Silicon Valley such as VC firms led by PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel and Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian.

In a promotional video posted on X, Sadeghi said its only "an inevitability that every single person has their entire human genome on their iPhone." If that sounds like a data security risk waiting to happen, that's because there's a similar case that is fresh in public memory.

The once popular consumer genetic testing company, 23andMe was at the receiving end of a data security breach in October 2023, after hackers gained access to personal data including family trees, birth years and geographic locations, of 6.9 million users and sold it on the dark web. The company was directed to pay a $30 million fine in September and provide three years of security monitoring to settle the lawsuit. It's been a dramatic fall for a company that was considered as pioneering, and valued at around $6 billion in 2021.

In the following months, most of the company's board resigned en masse leaving co-founder Anne Wojcicki as the sole member who has been contemplating delisting the company from Nasdaq. In November, it fired 40% of its workforce.

As the company implodes, the looming question around, "What happens to the DNA data of its 15 million customers?" becomes a pushing worry. Customers have scrambled to delete or withdraw their genetic data before the firm goes bust or ownership changes hands, but there are a couple of caveats. If users opted in to have their genetic data analysed, the information can't be withdrawn (A company spokesperson said about 80% had opted in).

Additionally, companies like 23andMe don't fall under Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) which has federal laws protecting consumer data. Although Ms. Wojcicki has promised users that the firm will stand guard over their data, there's little that inspires confidence right now.

But since the AI cat is out of the bag, the fledgling sector of AI-infused genomics has been drawing more interest. "Investors recognise the long-term value and impact of these technologies, particularly as the demand for personalised healthcare solutions rises," Mr. Anam said.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

The Grammys, the prestigious musical award, is held to honour and celebrate music and those who make it. A quiz on the awards and its recipients

Vighnesh P. Venkitesh

QUESTION 1
Name the alloy used to make the Grammy trophy.

QUESTION 2
While the awards cover a range of genres, what are the four general categories, also called the 'Big Four'?

QUESTION 3
How many artists have won the Big Four in the same year? Name them.

QUESTION 4
Name the legendary artist who was the first to win two Album of the Year awards and the only to win three Special Merit Awards.

QUESTION 5
Name the artist with the most number of Grammy wins.

Visual question:
Name this actor/director, his alias and the song which won him Record of the Year and Song of the Year in 2019. AP

Questions and Answers to the January 31 edition of the daily quiz:

1. The first Chief Minister, after the Delhi assembly was first constituted in 1952. **Ans: Brahm Prakash**
2. This person was the second to occupy the post of Chief Minister of Delhi. **Ans: Gurmukh Nihal Singh**
3. This person served as the Chief Minister of Delhi for two years from 1996 to 1998. **Ans: Sahib Singh Verma**
4. This person holds the record of serving the longest tenure as a female Chief Minister in India. **Ans: Sheila Dikshit**
5. This former Chief Minister is also a recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award. **Ans: Arvind Kejriwal**

Visual: Identify this late politician. **Ans: Sushma Swaraj**

Early Birds: Tito Shiladitya| Ashraf Basha| Pranab Biswas| Ashish Nair| Deepti Mishra

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

The guerrillas are against state violence

He was praised by the manager. He was hiding the light under a bushel all this while

S. Upendran

What is the meaning and origin of the idiom 'hide your light under a bushel'? (Sai Prasad, Vellore)

The expression is mostly used in British English. In the course of our life, we come across many talented individuals – some may sing well, some may excel at cooking, some may be good mimics, etc. But not all these individuals are keen on sharing their talent with others; those that are shy or modest usually keep them hidden. They wish to keep away from the limelight. When you tell someone not to hide his light under a bushel, what you are suggesting is not to conceal his abilities; that instead of trying to be modest, he should share all the positive qualities with those around him.

You should get Anamika to sing at the event. She has a beautiful voice, but has been hiding the light all these years under a bushel.

Wow! These paintings are awesome. You're a gifted painter. Why do you choose to hide the light under a bushel?

I understand that the idiom comes from the Bible; it has been taken from the Gospel of St. Matthew. Like 'inch', 'kilogram', 'litre', etc., a 'bushel' is a unit of measurement; it is normally usually used to measure the quantity of grain, fruit, vegetables, etc. In England, a bushel is roughly equivalent to eight gallons. In the past, in small households, bushel baskets and containers made from different materials were used to hold a bushel of grain. What the idiom 'hide your light under a bushel' seems to suggest is that there is no point in lighting a candle, if you are going to keep it hidden under a container.

What is the difference between gorilla and guerrilla? (Anil, Kanpur)

In terms of pronunciation, there is none; the two words are pronounced the same way. The vowels in the first and third syllable are pronounced like the 'a' in 'china', while the second syllable rhymes with 'pill', 'bill' and 'kill'. The two words are pronounced 'ge-RIL-e' with the stress on the second syllable. The meanings of the two words, however, are very different. A 'gorilla' is an animal; it is a relatively large ape known for its strength, and usually found in pockets of Africa.

I was surprised to learn that gorillas mostly stick to a vegetarian diet.

The word 'guerrilla' (sometimes spelt 'guerilla') comes from the Spanish 'guerra' meaning 'war'. It is normally used to refer to an individual who is at war with the Government or any other authority. The media sometimes refers to this group of individuals as underground fighters. The tactics adopted by the guerrillas are usually very different from those of the army – they launch quick attacks and then disappear.

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Encomium:
a formal expression of praise

Synonyms: eulogy, paean, panegyric

Usage: *Encomiums were bestowed on teachers at the school function.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/encomiumpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɛŋˈkəʊ.mɪ.əm/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, FEB. 03		
RISE	06:45	SET 18:21
RISE	10:16	SET 22:59
TUESDAY, FEB. 04		
RISE	06:45	SET 18:22
RISE	11:00	SET 23:56
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 05		
RISE	06:45	SET 18:22
RISE	11:47	SET 00:00

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	32	24
Mysuru	33	19
Bengaluru	32	20

Bengaluru Today
31°C Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be slight warm. Night also will be slight cool. Mostly dry weather to prevail.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
30°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be slight warm. Night also will be cool and hazy.

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THE HINDU
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Land acquisition for Namma Metro Phase 3 begins

BMRCL officials say Phase 3 will consist of Corridor 1, spanning 32.15 km from J.P. Nagar Phase 4 to Kempapura, and Corridor 2, covering 12.5 km from Hosahalli to Kadabagere

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has initiated the land acquisition process for the much-anticipated Namma Metro Phase 3 project.

According to BMRCL officials, Phase 3 will consist of two corridors – Corridor 1 spanning 32.15 km from J.P. Nagar Phase 4 to Kempapura, and Corridor 2 covering 12.5 km from Hosahalli to Kadabagere. Multiple interchange stations will be developed along these routes, including Peenya and J.P. Nagar stations on the Green Line, Mysuru Road Station on the Purple Line, and Sumanahalli Station on the Hosahalli-Kadabagere corridor.

J.P. Nagar Phase 4 will also link with the Pink Line at Bannerghatta Road, while Hebbal will serve as a crucial interchange for both the Blue Line, which connects to the airport, and the Red Line, which links Hebbal and Sarjapur.

26,811 sq.m. acquired

In the initial phase, BMRCL has already acquired and taken possession of 26,811 square meters of land, primarily for Corridor 1, which extends from J.P. Nagar Phase 4 to the Mysore Road Metro Station.

For Corridor 1 alone, BMRCL has identified 1,29,743 square meters of land, involving 777 private properties. Officials said, "Any additional land required for the project would be acquired in coordination with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). The entire project has been designed to ensure minimal impact on existing infrastructure, including roads, flyovers, and underpasses."

Slated for completion in 2029, Phase 3 is projected to accommodate 7.85 lakh passengers daily, extending Bengaluru's metro network to 222.2 km.

The Detailed Project Report (DPR) of Phase 3 outlines the construction of a double-decker viaduct, a feature that has contributed to the project's delay due to modifications in planning. The estimated cost of the project stands at ₹15,611 crore, with ₹7,577 crore secured through loans and ₹450 crore expected from revenue streams such as advertising and station naming rights.

In addition to land acquisition, preliminary geotechnical investigations have commenced along Magadi Road. "A private company has undertaken soil testing, with the first phase covering the stretch from Mysore Road Station to Kanteerava Studio Station, and the second phase extending from Hosahalli Station to Kadabagere Depot. Further studies will be conducted along other key stretches, including Kanteerava Studio to Kempapura and J.P. Nagar Phase 4 to Mysuru Road," the official added.

Entirely elevated

Phase 3, also referred to as the Orange Line, will be entirely elevated, providing metro connectivity to the western side of the Outer Ring Road (ORR) and underserved areas along Magadi Road.

Slated for completion in 2029, the expansion is projected to accommodate 7.85 lakh passengers daily, extending Bengaluru's metro network to 222.2 km.

Despite receiving all necessary statutory approvals, including clearance from the Union Cabinet in August 2024, the construction of Phase 3 has faced delays due to adjustments required for the double-decker viaduct.

Officials said that the new design necessitates about 25% more land for station buildings due to increased height requirements and modifications for road-widening along the alignment.

₹65 lakh tender floated, but Namma Metro's rainwater harvesting plans remain on paper

Akriti Duggal
BENGALURU

In a city grappling with water shortage and a plummeting groundwater table, the implementation of rainwater harvesting (RWH) remains a distant reality. This is true of not just residential and commercial structures, but the Namma Metro too, despite a ₹65 lakh tender floated by the BMRCL.

While BMRCL reports that approximately 150 RWH structures are currently operational, activists report a much lower number and question their effectiveness. "Our investigation reveals that only 30 rainwater harvesting systems are operational at metro stations along the Purple and Green Lines. For the Yellow Line, the government has not issued any written directive or notice regarding the installation of such systems. As a result, a significant amount of water is being wasted," said Raghavendra B. Pachhapur, Senior Project Lead with NGO ActionAid Association.

Mr. Pachhapur criticised the BWSSB, which plays a crucial role in implementing rainwater harvesting in the city. "BWSSB is avoiding its responsibilities and is more focused on large-scale projects. Its Vision 2050 plan involves bringing water from 250 km away, which is a waste of money and comes with enormous operating costs. Why not simply utilise the rainfall Bengaluru receives? BWSSB must take responsibility for capturing and storing the city's rainwater," he added.

BMRCL reports that approximately 150 RWH structures are currently operational, but activists say the number is much lower. FILE PHOTO

Responding to these concerns, Yashwanth Chavan, Chief PRO, BMRCL, said they are taking 'feasible necessary steps'. "A ₹65 lakh tender was announced in March 2024 for new RWH structures but was initially discharged due to a lack of response. On re-tendering, the contract was awarded in December 2024. The work has not yet begun," he said.

A primary challenge, Mr. Chavan says, is Bengaluru's geology, which makes it difficult to find the required depth for recharge wells. To address this, BMRCL plans to construct recharge wells along the median under the viaducts of Phase 2A and 2B, with site feasibility assessments currently underway. Additionally, new depots under construction will include RWH arrangements wherever possible.

Despite these plans, activists argue that progress is slow and the impact of existing RWH structures remains unclear. "With Bengaluru's population increasing and the BWSSB consistently not being able to make its mark, the city will soon not be able to depend on groundwater as well," an activist said.

In 2022, ActionAid conducted a survey to evaluate the status of RWH systems in Namma Metro infrastructure in Bengaluru. According to the ActionAid survey, an ideal RWH system includes pipes leading rainwater to percolate and recharge groundwater. However, their findings revealed that 8 pipes were found to be broken, 4 pits were clogged, 7 were filled with trash, 60 were not visible near the pillars, 5 water storage tanks were broken, among other problems in places where the system was implemented.

RWH is a simple method of collecting, filtering, and storing rainwater for future use. According to Section 72 of the BWSSB Act, RWH is mandatory for all existing buildings on plots of 2,400 sq. ft. or more, as well as for new construction on sites measuring 1,200 sq. ft. and above in Bengaluru.

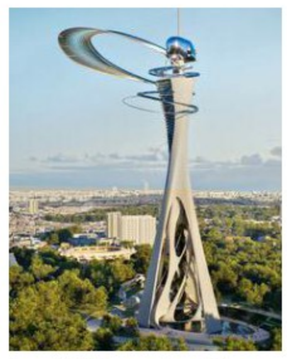
As of March 2024, a total of 1,96,591 residential buildings in Bengaluru have implemented rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems, while 39,213 buildings remain non-compliant despite facing monthly penalties. Since July 2016, the BWSSB has been collecting ₹1.98 crore to ₹2 crore in penalties each month for non-implementation of RWH in residential buildings.

Skydeck project on hold till location of city's second airport is finalised

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

Given that the proposed 250-metre high skydeck and the second airport for Bengaluru cannot be in close proximity of each other, the city's civic body has now put the skydeck project on the backburner till the location of the proposed second airport is finalised. The decision comes as the State government focuses on finalising land for Bengaluru's proposed second airport.

Sources in the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) confirmed that Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D.K. Shivakumar, to whom the skydeck has been has been a pet project, issued directions prioritising the airport project over the skydeck. The BBMP will resume efforts to identify suitable land to build the skydeck only after the airport location is finalised, a civic official said.


An artist's impression of the proposed skydeck. FILE PHOTO

The BBMP had wanted to build the skydeck on either the New Government Electric Factory (NGEF) premises or within Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited (KSDL) premises. However, both locations were ruled out owing to security concerns, as the Airport Authority of India (AAI) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) were unlikely to approve a high-rise structure in these areas.

After all proposed locations in the city were ruled out owing to objections from the airport and defence authorities, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike zeroed in on a 25-acre plot owned by Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises (NICE) in Hemmigepura in July 2024. It even invited objections from the public in November 2024, planning to acquire the land parcel in a barter with NICE. However, the company was not interested in such an exchange.

Meanwhile, work on identifying a suitable location and land for a second airport for the city began. Even as Home Minister G. Parameshwara is batting for setting it up along Tumakuru Road, Mr. Shivakumar is keen on setting it up in either Bidadi or Kanakapura, sources said.

While the government is yet to finalise the location for the second airport, the setting up a 250-metre high skydeck could jeopardise these plans, prompting Mr. Shivakumar to direct civic officials to press the pause button on the ambitious skydeck project for now.

Woman killed in freak accident

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A woman was killed in a freak accident while she was riding pillion with her brother on a scooter on Mysore Road in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The deceased Saroja, 47, a homemaker and resident of Kamakshipalya, was returning home with her brother after attending a marriage. While the duo was on their way, a person in a car parked on the road abruptly opened the right side door of the vehicle. The scooter rider crashed into the door and the duo fell on the road. Saroja came under the wheels of a BMTC bus that was behind their scooter and was crushed to death. With the help of passers-by, her brother rushed her Saroja to Victoria Hospital where a doctor declared her brought dead.

The Byatarayana Traffic Police have registered a case of death by rash and negligent driving against both the car and bus driver, and arrested them for further investigation.

Aero India 2025: Airspace closure timings revised

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Bangalore International Airport Ltd. (BIAL) has issued a revised passenger advisory on closure of airspace during the upcoming Aero India 2025 at the Air Force Station, Yelahanka. The revised advisory says the airspace will be closed from February 5 to 14 for less hours than earlier planned.

On January 21, BIAL issued an advisory that there would be airspace closure for a few hours every day from February 5 to 14 and commercial flight operations will be partially impacted. The airshow is being held between February 10 and 14 and practice days from February 5 to 8.

The revised advisory says the airspace will be closed between 9 a.m. and noon and 3 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. on February 5 and 6; between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. on February 7; and between 9 a.m. and noon and 3 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. on February 8.

On February 9, the closure will be between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

On the inaugural day on February 10, the airspace will be closed between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. and 3.30 p.m.

On February 11 and 12, it will be between noon and 2.30 p.m.

On February 13 and 14, the last two days of the airshow which are open to the public, airspace will be closed between 9.30 a.m. and noon and 2.30 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Sources said that the revised closure timing has been issued as airlines were unhappy that during the 10-day period, the airspace was to be closed for a total of 47 hours.

"Changes have been made in the timing to minimise flight disruption; the airspace closure time is now reduced. The airlines were unhappy and were continuously asking for change to minimise disruption," a source said.

BIAL has further said that passengers travelling through the Bengaluru airport have been asked to stay updated on the airspace closure timings and revised flight schedules as notified by the respective airline.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PUDUKKOTTAI -622 001
SHORT-TERM e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION Ref. No.E4/4742/2024

For and on behalf of the Government of Tamil Nadu, tenders in two cover system are invited from the manufacturers and fertilizer industries towards Supply of **Agricultural Grade Gypsum** for implementing **"Reclamation of Alkaline Soils" for the Year 2024-25**

Sl. No.	Name of the Item	Approximate Value in Rs.	Earnest Money Deposit to be paid in Rs.
1	Supply of **Agricultural Grade Gypsum** for implementing **"Reclamation of Alkaline Soils"**	3,99,00,000/-	3,99,000/-

e-tender should be submitted for the items mentioned above along with specified EMD. The e-Tender Document is available in the Government Website **http://www.tntenders.gov.in.**

The time schedule for opening of the tender is as follows:

a	Last date and time for receipt of tender	12.02.2025, 11.00 am.
b	Date and time of opening of tender	12.02.2025, 12.30 pm.
c	Date and time for Pre-bid meeting	07.02.2025, 11.00 am.

For further particulars, please contact: Joint Director of Agriculture, Kattupudhukkulam, Pudukkottai - 622 001. Phone: 04322 – 221666, email: jdapdk@gmail.com.
DIPR/ 422 /TENDER/2025
Joint Director of Agriculture, Pudukkottai.

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER
(Only through KPP-Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from registered Agencies for the following works:

Office of the Chief Engineer (East), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru - 560009

Sl. No.	Division	IFT Number		Amount put to tender EMD (in Rs.)	Last Date & Time for Submission of Tender	Date & Time for Opening of Tender
1	East-1	BWSSB/EE(East)-1/PB/3858/ 2024-25 Date: 31.01.2025 (3rd Call)	1	Rs.57,44,679/- Rs.1,15,000/-	10.02.2025 upto 4:00 PM	12.02.2025 after 5:00 PM
2			2	Rs.64,46,206/- Rs.1,28,930/-		
3			3	Rs.81,71,287/- Rs.1,63,430/-		
4			4	Rs.68,64,424/- Rs.1,37,300/-		
5		BWSSB/EE(East)-1/PB/3858/ 2024-25 Date: 31.01.2025 (4th Call)	5	Rs.40,87,811/- Rs.81,800/-		
6			6	Rs.43,84,731/- Rs.87,700/-		

Sd/- **Executive Engineer (East-1)**

Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru - 560009

7	South West-1	BWSSB/EESW-1/TO/PB/4274/ /2024-25, Date:31.01.2025 (Reserved for SC Category) (2nd Call)		Rs.19,72,796/- Rs.24,660/-	12.02.2025 upto 4:00 PM	14.02.2025 after 3:00 PM
				Sd/- **Executive Engineer (South West-1)**		
8	South West-2	BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3822/ /2024-25, Date:01.02.2025 (4th Call)	1	Rs.6,41,601/- Rs.16,000/-	09.02.2025 upto 5:00 PM	11.02.2025 after 10:30 AM
9		BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3822/ /2024-25, Date:01.02.2025 (2nd Call)	2	Rs.7,30,737/- Rs.21,600/-		
10		BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3822/ /2024-25, Date:01.02.2025 (2nd Call) (Reserved for SC Category)	3	Rs.5,96,342/- Rs.7,500/-		

Sd/- **Executive Engineer (South West-2)**

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurment process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/BCPL/4748/2024-25

THE HINDU GROUP

ACES SPORTS QUIZ

1. Shrimant Jha won the gold medal in the left-hand para category and also secured a bronze medal in the right-hand para category at the 2024 Asian Championship in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. In which sport does he compete?
2. Which country hosted the 2024 Asian Wrestling Championships, where India's Udit Kumar won a silver medal in the men's 57kg category?
3. In 2024, India formally expressed its intent to host a future edition of the Olympic Games, aiming to transform its sporting landscape. Which year is India targeting to host the Olympics, aligning with its vision for global sporting prominence?

Scan the QR code or visit **sstar.news/SSA2025AQPA** to vote for your favourite stars and take part in the quiz. Top 3 winners every day will win exciting gift vouchers*.

*T&C apply.

Answers to yesterday's quiz:
1. China
2. skeet
3. Aman Sehrawat

Yesterday's Winners:
1. Somasundarraj, Chennai
2. Rajeswari. A, Neyveli
3. Aashvi Kohli, Ghaziabad

Amul presents SPORTSTAR ACES 2025 INDIA TRIUMPHS
#SSaces2025

Published by Nirmala Lakshman at No 19&21, Bhagwan Mahaveer Road, Bengaluru-560001 and Printed by C. Sridhar at Plot No. 13-D, Bommasandra-Jigani Link Road, KIADB Industrial Area, Bommasandra, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-560099 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRP Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

From Page One

Draft law plans to ask loanees not to repay unlicensed MFIs

The proposed Ordinance said that "no civil court shall entertain any suit or proceeding against the borrower for the recovery of any amount of loan including interest."

It said all suits and proceedings pending against borrowers for the recovery of loans would be closed.

The proposed Ordinance was drafted under the leadership of Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H.K. Patil to be vetted by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah before sending it to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot for his assent.

The total gross loan portfolio of the MFIs in the State was ₹42,265 crore in 2023-24, as per the data given by MFIs. The average loan per client in Karnataka is ₹44,036.

Experts in the MFIs say that the proposed Ordinance would adversely impact the recovery of loans both by registered, and unlicensed and unregistered MFIs. It will certainly be challenged in court. Moreover, all SGHs are unregistered entities and the proposed Ordinance would be against the SHG movement, according to experts.

As per the draft, all MFIs are required to register with the registering authority (deputy commissioners) within 30 days from the enactment of the law by specifying details about their operations, rate of interest being charged, and system of loan recovery.

The registering authority should verify the details furnished by the MFIs and accord registration for operation of MFIs for a period of one year. The MFIs should apply for renewal of registration, within 60 days before the expiry of the period of one year.

The authority, either *suo motu* or upon receipt of complaint by a borrower, would be empowered to cancel the registration of an MFI. No MFI should seek any security from a borrower by way of pawn, pledge or other security for the loan, the draft said.

MFIs should issue loan cards to borrowers having all details in the vernacular language understood by the borrower.

The effective rate of interest charged by MFI should be displayed in all its offices. All communications to the borrower should be in Kannada. Every MFI should have a registered office in the local area, the proposed Ordinance says.

A complaint can be filed regarding violation of the provision of the proposed Ordinance at the police station. No police officer should refuse to register a case. A police officer not below the rank of Dy.SP should be empowered to file a *suo moto* case, according to the proposed Ordinance.

Centre plans to shift CESCK to Bengaluru

Union Minister agrees to take centre out of CIIL and make it autonomous, but turns down plea to hand it over to the State govt.

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Kannada in Mysuru. M.A. SRIRAM

The Union government plans to separate the Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Kannada (CESCK) from the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru, give it autonomy, and shift it to Bengaluru.

Sixteen years after Kannada was granted the Classical Language status in 2008, CESCK still does not have its own building and is dependent on CIIL for all its expenses, creating hurdles for its development. In addition, the lack of funds from the Union government has hampered its activities.

In this backdrop, a delegation led by Kannada Development Authority (KDA) chairman Purushothama Bilimale met Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan recently and urged him to not only separate the centre from CIIL, but also give it autonomy and hand it over to the State government, on the lines of a similar centre in Tamil Nadu.

While the Minister reportedly agreed to take the centre out of CIIL and make it autonomous, he turned down the request to hand it over to the State.

Over and above, Mr. Pradhan promised the delegation that the Centre would soon be shifted to Bengaluru.

"The Minister turned down our request to hand over the centre to the State government. He said the Tamil centre was handed over to the State by the erstwhile UPA government for political reasons, but no other centre will be transferred to States as the classical language initiative is a Central project. However, he said not only Kannada, but all classical language centres will be brought out of the ambit of CIIL and developed as autonomous institutions under the Central government. He said the CESCK will be shifted to Bengaluru as only then will the research and development work at the centre benefit from the science and technology ecosystem in the city," Prof. Bilimale said.

Mr. Pradhan further told the delegation to organise a meeting of scholars, thinkers, writers, and technologists in Bengaluru, for crowdsourcing suggestions for the development of CESCK. The Minister will personally visit Bengaluru and chair this meeting, Prof. Bilimale said, adding the meeting will be organised as soon as the date of his visit is fixed.

"The Minister also promised that if KDA submits proposals for research projects related to classical Kannada, necessary funds would be released immediately. So KDA will work on these lines and submit our proposals soon," he said.

Maoist Tombattu Lakshmi surrenders in Udupi dist.

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Tombattu Lakshmi (second from left), with Udupi Deputy Commissioner K. Vidyakumari and Superintendent of Police K. Arun in Udupi on Sunday. UMESH S. SHETTIGAR

Tombattu Lakshmi, a Maoist from Tombattu village of Kundapur taluk in Udupi district, surrendered before the district administration in Udupi on Sunday.

In her brief statement to the media, Ms. Lakshmi said her native place still has no road connectivity and water facility, and it lacks necessary healthcare facilities. She asked the government to provide basic facilities for her village at the earliest.

Ms. Lakshmi said after reading the news about the recent surrender of six Maoists, she evinced interest in accepting the policy mooted by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. She voluntarily came forward to surrender and there was no pressure on her.

She was then taken away by a team of the Udupi police.

Shripal Gowda, member of the State committee meant to oversee the surrender policy of Maoists, told reporters that Ms. Lakshmi was the eighth Maoist to surrender in recent days. In all, 21 Maoists of Karnataka have surrendered so far.

"With the surrender of Ms. Lakshmi, there are no Kannadigas active in the Maoist movement," he claimed.

The most cases related to Maoists have been registered in Udupi, Chikkamagaluru, and Shivamogga districts.

The committee will approach the High Court of Karnataka shortly for setting up a special court in the State for the speedy trial of all cases against surrendered Maoists. Ms. Lakshmi's husband Saleem surrendered before the Andhra Pradesh government four years ago and all his cases were withdrawn, he said.

Ms. Lakshmi was not actively involved in any Maoist activities in recent years. She voluntarily approached the committee and State Intelligence police officers to surrender. She is willing to fight the cases registered against her in Karnataka, Mr. Gowda said.

Udupi Superintendent of Police K. Arun said there were three cases registered against Ms. Lakshmi in 2007 and 2008 in Amaseibail police station limits in Udupi district.

One case is related to an exchange of fire between a Maoist group and Anti-Naxal Force (ANF) personnel, and another pertains to threatening a person and assaulting him. The third case is related to pasting of pamphlets related to Maoist activities. She was at large since 2007 and warrants were issued against her.

Sustained efforts by the local police, coupled with efforts by the State police Intelligence wing, and ANF operation led to the surrender of the Maoist, who is accused in three pending cases, Dr. Arun said.

She will be medically examined and produced shortly before the jurisdiction sessions court. The police then will take her into custody and question her in connection with the three cases.

Udupi Deputy Commissioner K. Vidyakumari said the district-level Maoist surrender committee has included Ms. Lakshmi in the "A" category of Maoists for which the State policy provides for a compensation of ₹7 lakh.

Ms. Lakshmi's husband and a few of her family members were present.

'Siddaramaiah will be CM for full term'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok's prediction on Saturday that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will step down in November 2025 triggered intense political discussions in the State, Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Sunday said Mr. Siddaramaiah will continue for the full five-year term.

Dr. Parameshwara said the Congress Legislature Party elected Mr. Siddaramaiah as Chief Minister for a five-year term. The Congress legislators had not been informed that Mr. Siddaramaiah's term was fixed for 30 months of the five-year term. The party high command also had not informed him or other legislators about the 30-month tenure. However, the high command would take a final call on the change of the Chief Minister, said the Home Minister, who has been expressing solidarity with Mr. Siddaramaiah.

Taking a jibe at Mr. Ashok, Dr. Parameshwara said he was not aware of the astrological skills of the BJP leader.

Mr. Ashok said that "a game of musical chairs will begin in November. Someone else is ready to take over Mr. Siddaramaiah's position. I am not an astrologer, but I have insight into the State's politics".

On Saturday, KPCC chief and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said: "Mr. Ashok keeps predicting like an astrologer once in a while. I will consult him next time."

State government plotting to shut down KIOCL in political vendetta, claims HDK

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy alleged that the Congress government in Karnataka was plotting to close down Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) in Mangaluru in a political vendetta against him.

Speaking to presspersons in Channarayapatna in Hassan district on Sunday, Mr. Kumaraswamy said the company had been offering employment to thousands of people. After becoming the Union Minister, the first file he cleared was approving the Devadari mine for KIOCL in Sandur taluk of Ballari district. The same had been approved by the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government earlier.

"I recommended financial assistance to operationalise the mine. However, Congress leaders twisted this development deliberately and obstructed the process for political reasons," he said.

The State government's obstruction resulted in many workers losing jobs. "If the Devadari mine was operationalised by now, 2,500 more people would have gotten jobs. To prevent its closure, we decided to merge it with the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), while the State government is busy strangling the industry," he said.

Mr. Kumaraswamy alleged that the State government was obstructing the revival of HMT as well. "When I showed interest in reviving HMT, the Congress government intervened to obstruct by raising the forest issue. The government is interested in stopping development over political differences," he remarked.

He also said he had begun the process to revive the Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Plant at Bhadravati in Shivamogga. "The plant was set up by the Mysore kings. Even if the State government supports my efforts or not, we will revive the plant. Recently, I visited the Bokaro steel plant in Jharkhand. We are investing ₹20,000 crore for its expansion," he said.

'Cong. has no moral right to criticise Union Budget'

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has said the Karnataka government had no moral right to criticise the Union Budget.

Mr. Kumaraswamy said when the Congress was in power earlier, it did not give funds for any irrigation project, including Hemavati, Harangi, Vatehole, or Kabini. "The irrigation projects of the State got funds only when H.D. Deve Gowda became Prime Minister," he said.

He said the State government did not approach him on any project concerning Karnataka. "What is the point in complaining after the Budget? They don't even have courage to present proposals before the Prime Minister," he stated. Mr. Kumaraswamy said that the Union government was committed to supporting the growth of Artificial Intelligence industry in Karnataka.

CM cancels official programmes

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah cancelled all his official programmes on Sunday after doctors at Manipal Hospitals, Bengaluru, advised him to take rest after he complained of pain on his left knee.

Owing to pressure

According to a press release issued by the Chief Minister's office, doctors examined his knee and said the pain was owing to the pressure on it; the knee had been operated earlier for a ligament injury.

"There was no other health issue," the doctors said.

"Doctors advised the Chief Minister to take rest and not to travel for the next two days. Following the advice, the Chief Minister cancelled all the programmes on Sunday," the release said.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Cash for media coverage

A few days ago, this reporter was sipping tea at a popular roadside hotel in Kalladka, near Bantwal, with fellow journalists, after the end of a long spot review by an elected representative of the ongoing road widening work of National Highway-75. Then, a member of the party to which the elected representative belongs, came along. He forwarded his hand in which he was holding a currency note and said, "This is for your tea expenses".
The reporters asked the party worker to take it back and chastised him for trying to offer money. This reporter sent a message to the elected representative expressing dismay over the conduct. The elected representative called back to claim that the party worker had offered the cash on his own. Later, the party worker apologised for his conduct. In another instance, scribes objected to the conduct of a charitable institution offering money.
The assumption that journalists expect "returns" for doing their job is appalling every time it happens.

Doubts over probe

Some BJP leaders have expressed suspicion over the way the investigation into an accident involving Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar was conducted.
Iranna Kadadi, Rajya Sabha member (BJP), has alleged that the police towed away the car in a hurry as the Minister was carrying a bag of cash to be used for party activities. Two other leaders have also made similar allegations.
However, the Minister refused to respond to the allegations.
When she was discharged from hospital, the Minister said: "There is no need to answer those who play politics even in death or such emergencies."
Meanwhile, Bheemashankar S. Guled, SP, has clarified that the investigation was conducted as per procedure. He said the car was removed from the spot within hours of the incident, only to enable smooth traffic flow.

Kharge's comments irk BJP leaders

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge's *(pictured)* remarks on Maha Kumbh have apparently not gone down well with a section of people. His comments on BJP leaders taking holy dips at the grand spiritual event in Prayagraj sparked a political controversy.

"Does taking a dip in the Ganga remove poverty? Does it provide food?"
Mr. Kharge had asked BJP leaders. Irked with the Congress leader's remarks, the BJP leaders questioned Mr Kharge's silence when members of other religions embarked on pilgrimages abroad, calling it "selective secularism."

Raghava M
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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAZIA BEGUM, W/o. Syed Rasul, R/ at No.9, 7th Cross, K G Halli, Bangalore 45 have changed my date of birth from 01–07–1948 to 11–06–1951 for all my future purposes through affidavit 31–01–2025 sworn before the notary Udaykumar.K

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF LD. SH. AMIT KUMAR, DISTRICT JUDGE, COMMERCIAL COURT-01, NORTH DISTRICT, ROHINI COURT, DELHI
COMMERCIAL SUIT NO. CS, COMM 216 OF 2023
Under section 2(1) (c) (i) and (xviii) Commercial Courts Act, 2015
PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT
(Order 5 Rule 20 of the code of civil Procedure)
IN THE MATTER OF:-
M/S DR. MOREPEN LIMITED ...PLAINTIFF
VERSUS
M/S NAKODA MARKETING ...DEFENDANT
MEMO OF PARTIES
M/S DR. MOREPEN LIMITED
THROUGH ITS AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVE
SH. SATISH PANDEY, HAVING ITS REGISTERED OFFICE AT
409, 4TH FLOOR, ANTRIKSH BHAWAN, 22, K. G. MARG, NEW DELHI-110001
ALSO AT
DR. MOREPEN LIMITED
WAREHOUSE/BRANCH OFFICE AT
AG-01, BASEMENT AND GF,
SANJAY GANDHI TRANSPORT NAGAR, DELHI-110042 ...PLAINTIFF
VERSUS
M/S NAKODA MARKETING
THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR
MR. DEEPAK JETHMAL JAIN
NO. 92, 2ND CROSS PAPANNALANE, AKKIPETE-560053, BENGALURU ...DEFENDANT NO.1
ALSO AT
M/S NAKODA MARKETING
THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR
MR. DEEPAK JETHMAL JAIN
124/1, CHIKKAPETE MAIN ROAD, NEAR BABA RAMADEV TEMPLE, BANGALORE SOUTH, BANGALORE-560053 ...DEFENDANT NO. 2
ALSO AT
M/S NAKODA MARKETING
THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR
DEEPAK JETHMAL JAIN
GROUND FLOOR, AKKIPETE, WARD NUMBER 120, COTTON PETE, BANGALORE-560053 ...DEFENDANT NO. 3
COPY OF MEMO OF PARTIES ATTACHED HEREWITH FOR ADDRESS
WHEREAS you are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby notified that if you shall not file your written reply within 30 days of this Publication and not defend the case on the **21/02/2025 at 10.00 am** fixed for the final deposal, it will be heard and determined ex-parte
Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this 19/12/24
NOTE. HAVING CIRCULATION OF THE ADDRESS OF RESPONDENT MENTIONED ABOVE
SEAL DISTRICT JUDGE (COMMERCIAL)

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

With deep sorrow and profound grief, the sad demise of our beloved National Vice President

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DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

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Nirmala, Siddharth, Bharath and your family & friends

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Statue of actor Shankar Nag

Those who stand tall across Bengaluru

The city has several statues of people installed and new ones are being added every now and then

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Adding to the galaxy of statues on the premises of the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru, a 25-foot-tall bronze statue of Nada Devi Bhuvaneshwari was unveiled near the western entrance of the State Secretariat by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah recently.

This is part of the Karnataka Namakarana Suvarna Mahotsava celebrations organised to mark the naming of the State as 'Karnataka' during the tenure of the late D. Devaraj Urs. The statue, sculpted at an approximate cost of ₹21.24 crore, is 41-foot-tall including the pedestal and weighs around 31.5 tonnes.

The Vidhana Soudha premises has multiple statues of leaders, social reformers, and others already, including those of B.R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Kengal Hanumanthaiya, D. Devaraj Urs, Nadaprabhu Kempe Gowda, Basaveshwara, Mahakavi Valmiki, and Kanakadasa. While there were only a few in the past, many statues have been added as the years have gone by.

Other parts of Bengaluru too are dotted with statues, the tallest among them being that of Nadaprabhu Kempe Gowda on the international airport premises. Called the 'Statue of Prosperity' or 'Pragatiya Prathime', the mammoth statue of the founding architect of Bengaluru holding a sword stands 108 ft in height and weighs 4 tonnes.

In busy centres

The other statues located in the city's busy centres include that of Swami Vivekananda, Sir M. Visvesvaraya, Kittur Rani Chennamma, Sangolli Rayananna, Chamarajendra Wadiyar, Kuvempu, and D.V. Gundappa. There are some that hark back to the colonial era such as that of Queen Victoria, King Edward VII, and Mark Cubbon. These apart, which were installed by various State governments or public bodies, there are some which have been installed by common people and residents of localities as a mark of adoration for their favourite "heroes". While the city has traditionally had statues of matinee idol Rajkumar in some places, in recent years, multiple statues or busts of his late son and film star Puneet Rajkumar have come up.

There are also statues of film personalities such as Vishnuvardhan and Ambareesh. A statue commonly found near autorickshaw stands is that of the late actor Shankar Nag, who has been the idol of auto drivers ever since he played the protagonist in the film *Auto Raja*.

A unique statue, located at Gautampura, is that of football legend Pele. Next to him stands the statue of Mother Teresa.

Statue of Nada Devi Bhuvaneshwari. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Statue of K.C. Reddy on Vidhana Soudha premises. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Mahakavi Valmiki. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Nadaprabhu Kempe Gowda. SUDHAKARA JAIN

A bronze statue of a meditating Mahatma Gandhi next to Vidhana Soudha. FILE PHOTO

Statue of 16th century saint-poet Kanakadasa. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Cat rehabilitation and adoption centre in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Tekion, innovator of the first cloud-native platform serving the automotive retail ecosystem, has partnered with Praana Animal Foundation to open a dedicated cat rehabilitation and adoption centre in Bengaluru.

This initiative is part of Tekion's ongoing global commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The centre, located off Kanakapura Road, will provide comprehensive care for feral, injured, rescued, and abandoned cats. The centre will offer various services, including post operation care, rehabilitation, and adoption support for cats, according to a release by Tekion.

"We are proud to partner with Praana Animal Foundation to make a positive impact on the lives of vulnerable cats in Bengaluru," said Rana Robillard, Chief People Officer of Tekion. "This centre will not only provide essential care but also raise awareness about animal welfare and responsible pet ownership," she said.

This collaboration marks the third joint initiative between Tekion and Praana in the past year, building on the successful launch of a 24/7 animal ambulance service in 2024. "This centre is a dream come true for me. This is the first post-care unit in India for cats, we wanted to fill the gap between rescuers and a place to keep them till they get adopted. Thanks to Tekion's support, we can now provide specialized care and find loving homes for cats," said Samyukta Hornad, actor and Founder of Praana Animal Foundation. "We have miles to go, we look forward to many more collaborations with Tekion that further our cause for animals," she said.

According to the release, the centre is equipped with post-operative care facilities for cats. Once the cats are fully fit, adoption drives will be conducted regularly to help cats find their forever families. Adding a touch of creativity, the centre features cat-themed murals painted by students from Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat and other Bengaluru-based art institutes.

Home is where the art is, the science too

The poet Paul Valery said poems are never finished, only abandoned. Homes are never finished too. There's always another extension waiting to be built, another shelf to be added

ABOUT 500 WORDS

Suresh Menon

The Greek word 'Oikonomia' referred to the order and management of the home – Oikos means "household", and nemein is "management." REUTERS

Things happen at home that don't happen anywhere else. At a physical level, the home provides organization, with different rooms for different activities; it is a place of comfort, cleanliness, intimacy, solitude, and creativity. And disagreements, conflicts, loneliness too. Where else but in our homes do we rip off the masks we wear to the outside world, perhaps put on new (or old) ones? With so much emotion invested in the home, it should be the natural topic for philosophers.

Yet, as the Italian philosopher Emanuele Coccia points out, philosophy, which has a lot to say about cities has very little to say about the home.

The ancient Greeks didn't ignore the home (they tried not to ignore anything). The Greek word 'Oikonomia' referred to the order and management of the home – Oikos means "household", and nemein is "management." Thus did we derive the word 'economics'. For Aristotle, Economics was the science of 'household management', and by extension, management of the city, state and so on.

I do a quick calculation and find I am currently living in the 15th place I have called 'home'. That's only half the number of places Coccia called 'home' before sitting down to write *Philosophy of the Home: Domestic Space and Happiness*. It is a personal, reflective, provocative, sometimes contradictory, but always fascinating study of our most intimate space.

"A house," wrote Le Corbusier, "is a machine for living in". It provides "baths, sun, hot water, cold water, warmth at will, conservation of food, hygiene [and] beauty in the sense of good proportion". For Coccia, a home is "the epitome of moral reality: a mental and material artefact that makes us inhabit the world better than our nature would otherwise allow." When our homes disappoint us it is because they cannot maintain the silent promise of shared happiness they made at our first meeting.

The bathroom and the kitchen, says Coccia contain a range of gizmos from microwave ovens to washing machines, making these the most technically complex and therefore modern spaces in the home.

Treatises on homes, if one goes by the Coccia book, are excuses to travel into and beyond the feelings they inspire. Digression makes it all very interesting. For example, on the subject of cooking, Coccia says, "We can have no intimate relationship with the world without transforming it." There is a connection, and it's fun to identify it.

Similarly, although he comes from another angle, Bill Bryson finds writing about homes a neat way of getting into thoughts that do not necessarily cohere. In *At Home,* he discusses the kitchen of the Duke of Marlborough, mainly to tell us that the Duke was "so cheap, he refused to dot his 'I's when he wrote, to save on ink". The gossip is fun too.

The poet Paul Valery said poems are never finished, only abandoned. Homes are never finished too. There's always another extension waiting to be built, another shelf to be added. Homes aren't abandoned either, merely restyled.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 3, 1975

Training for Women in Doll-Making

Bangalore, Feb. 2: Under the Central Government sponsored half a million jobs scheme, women belonging to economically backward classes in Karnataka were being given training in crafts, toys and doll making.

Mrs. Vittal, an expert in handicrafts who is imparting training told pressmen here today that two batches of 20 students each were trained by her in toll and toy making and she was training a third batch at Chitra Cottage Industries in N.R. Colony in the city.

She said empty tins, cartoons and rags could be converted into handicraft articles and markets profitably.

Foundation laid for Mandya stadium

Bangalore, Feb. 2: The Chief Minister, Mr. D. Devaraj Urs today stressed the need for promotion of sports in rural areas. He was laying the foundation for a stadium in Mandya town about 110 kms from here. Mr. Urs attributed the defeat of the Indian cricket team at the hands of the West Indies due to the lack of stamina of the Indian players to withstand a five-day test. "That was perhaps the reason why India had not produced fast bowlers", he added. Mr Urs said that while constructing buildings for colleges, equal attention should be paid to the construction of stadiums and students hostels. He said one of the reasons for student unrest was that while college buildings were constructed there was no provision of facilities like playgrounds and hostels.

CITYBEATS

Sing out

FROM FEBRUARY 5
The Indian Music Experience Museum is launching the Voice Excellence Program, an online certification course for singers and voice artistes. Ideal for artistes of all genres, the program offers personalised training with customised feedback to refine techniques, as well as expert mentorship. Open to voice enthusiasts aged 16 and above.
To register log onto indianmusicexperience.org

Sip sweet

ONGOING
Maverick & Farmer has introduced Jaggeries of India - a limited-edition menu that celebrates Indian jaggery through specialty coffee. Enjoy unique flavours such as the Kolhapuri Gur Flat White, Nolen Gur Ristretto and more, inspired by jaggery variants found in Karnataka, Kerala, Goa, West Bengal and Maharashtra.
At all Maverick & Farmer outlets in the city

Still shining

ONGOING
Southern Stars is an exhibition of photographs and cine memorabilia curated by photographer Claire Arni. The pieces taken from her own collection include black and white photos of MGR, Sivaji Ganesan and others, as well as behind-the-scenes images captured by Claire herself of poster makers and others in the industry.
At Gallery Sumukha, till March 1, 2025

Gourmet's choice Chinese potatoes can be used in a variety of dishes. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT / RASHMI GOPAL RAO

Memories of a winter tuber

Chinese potatoes or sambrani gadde are a vegetarian delight not too many people are aware of

Rashmi Gopal Rao

"The task of cleaning *sambrani gadde* by vigorously rubbing them in a jute bag was always mine at home," reminisces Vijayalakshmi Rao, a mental health professional from Basavanagudi. "Even though the task was laborious, it was worth it as my mother would make a delectable curry which was a household favourite. We haven't made it ever since my mother passed."

A popular winter vegetable, *sambrani gadde* as it is called in Kannada is known as *koorka* in Kerala, *kooka* in the Konkan region and *sirukizhangu* in Tamil Nadu.

A perennial herbaceous plant, native to tropical Africa, Chinese potatoes are also grown in Asian countries including Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia and Malaysia. In India, it is cultivated in coastal Karnataka, the Konkan region and Kerala, and is available from October to February.

"It's availability is closely tied to the winter season, making it a beloved vegetable during the cooler months," says Bhavesh Pradip Tambe, Executive Chef, The Vitskamats Group. "*Koorka* is typically harvested from late October through early February, with the peak harvest season falling between December and January."

It is key to note that while it is harvested earlier in Kerala, a special variety of this vegetable called *Sanekallu Sambrani* is available in the Udupi region during November and December. Cultivated in the village of Sanekallu, it is known to have a distinct flavour due to the local soil, water and climatic conditions.

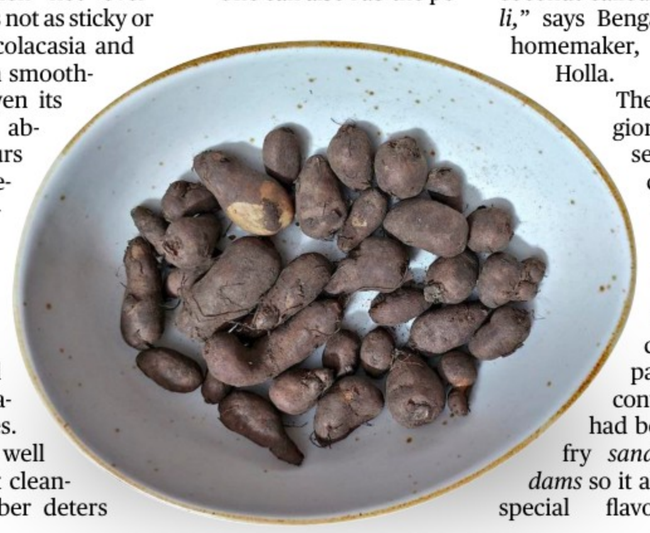
"The villages in and around Udupi are known for a better quality of this tuber," says Naren Thimmaiah Barianda, Executive Chef, Vivanta Bengaluru, Residency Road. "They taste better due to terroir and are typically planted during the monsoon, so they are ready for harvesting by November. They are carefully dug out from the soil and these tiny tubers have a whitish and violet hue when peeled."

Unique flavour
While Chinese potaotes look like colacasia (arbi/taro root), these muddy tubers are much smaller in size and have a typical aroma and flavour.

"The flavour of *koorka* is mild, earthy and slightly nutty, making it adaptable to various types of dishes," says Shailendra Singh, Corporate Chef Pride Hotels and Resorts.

"It is less sweeter than a regular potato and has a more savoury profile that pairs well with a host of spices," he adds.

With a firm and crunchy texture when not overcooked, it is not as sticky or fibrous as colacasia and has a much smoother feel. Given its ability to absorb flavours from a variety of ingredients, *koorka* is an ideal candidate for both simple and elaborate savoury dishes.



It is well known that cleaning this tuber deters most people from preparing it. Since they are small and the outer skin is rather thin, its removal can be quite challenging.

One of the most effective methods is soak the potatoes in water for around 30 minutes to soften the skin. Next, drain the water and place them in a wet jute bag and rub well. This helps loosen the skin whilst leaving most of the tuber intact.

One can also rub the potatoes against a stone or use a peeler to gently remove the skin. "Our hands would be blackened after cleaning them but the taste of the crunchy *upkari* (stir fry) my mother made is still fresh in my mind," says Bengaluru-based Udaya Shenai, a former banker, who hails from Mulki in coastal Karnataka.

Delicious dishes
From stir fries and curries to sambhar and stew, *koorka* finds its place in a number of palatable preparations.

"In coastal Karnataka, we cook *sambrani gadde* with tamarind extract, jaggery and a ground mixture of coconut, red chillies and mustard, and season it with curry leaves. We also mash it with raw green chillies and mix it with curds and temper it," adds Vijayalakshmi.

Apart from this, *koorka* is used in sambhar with vegetables such as *avarekai* (hyacinth beans). "We also cook it in a buttermilk-based gravy with ground green chillies, cumin and coconut called *majjige huli*," says Bengaluru-based homemaker, Ambika Holla.

The Konkan region too has several recipes for *kooka*. "My mother always made the *upkari* in a thick cast iron pan with coconut oil which had been used to fry *sandige* or *vadams* so it always had a special flavour," says Udaya. "It is a part of our gravies where we pair it with legumes and cook them in a ground mixture of roasted chillies, coconut and tamarind. This is finished with a garlic seasoning."

It can also be cooked like a *batate saung* where *kooka* is added instead of potatoes and cooked with plenty of onions, red chilli powder and a little bit of tamarind.

Sirukizhangu as it is called in Tamil Nadu is used to make *sirukizhangu puli kozhambu* (a tamarind-based curry) apart from being deep fried as chips. "*Sirukizhangu Varuval* which is *koorka* pan fried with asafoetida, turmeric, red chili powder and salt is a popular preparation," says Chef Sheetharam Prasaad N, Corporate Executive Chef, GRT Hotels and Resorts. "It is cooked on low heat until brown and crispy and garnished with fried curry leaves and black pepper."

Chef Naren further adds that *koorka* is an integral part of the Syrian Christian food menu during Christmas festivities.

"We have some traditional recipes sourced from the households of the Syrian Christian community from Travancore who use this tuber during this season. There is a stir fry preparation called *Koorka Mezhakkivaretti* where sliced *koorka* is tossed with shallots, cumin and red chillies in coconut oil and seasoned. *Koorka Chemeen Perlan*, a coconut-based curry where *koorka* is paired with small prawns is also popular around this time," he says.

FILM REVIEW

Mirror to life A still from *Nodidavaru Enantare*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Journeying towards finding one's self

In 'Nodidavaru Enantare,' starring Naveen Shankar, director Kuldeep Cariappa crafts a poignant tale of a man trying to free himself from the pressurising thoughts that trap him in mundanity

Vivek MV

In *Nodidavaru Enantare* (meaning, 'what will people say'), life is falling apart for Siddharth (Naveen Shankar). He has broken up with his girlfriend and is on the verge of losing his job. One night, he gets slapped by his junior for judging her. The final blow arrives when Siddharth receives a call about his father's demise.

Filled with frustration, he bangs the steering of his car. It's a small moment, which you wouldn't have seen in a typical commercial Kannada movie. In this film, director Kuldeep Cariappa pauses during this relatable expression before shifting to the funeral scene. In his feature film debut, Kuldeep defies the traditional screenplay and sends a message that he isn't here to make easy movies.

Nodidavaru Enantare is a refreshing film, even if it dabbles with the oft-entried coming-of-age genre. The film is a poignant snapshot of a youngster striving to find himself while struggling to move on from his bitter past. A web designer hailing from Kodagu, Siddharth fails to find a home away from home in Bengaluru. He lives with the constant fear of being abandoned by people he loves, including his mother, who had left him when he was two years old.

The film begins on a slightly jarring note, with dialogues and scenes conveying the obvious. However, it grows on you gradually and finds its right pace when Siddharth sets out on a nomadic journey to free himself from thoughts that trap him in mundanity.

Road films are challenging to pull off due to the lack of drama, but Kuldeep's ideas get bolstered by his technicians. Mayuresh Adhikar's music flows with the film's many moods, while Ashwin Kennedy's beautiful cinematography makes you believe in the enriching quality of travelling. Siddharth reads 'Into the Wild' and the film is Cariappa's ode to Jon Krakauer's story of a young man vanishing into the wilderness to chase his dreams and find himself.

Perhaps, in another scenario, Siddharth would have updated his profile on a job portal after he gets fired. Perhaps he would have turned to his friends to overcome his existential crisis. However, this film believes in its characters acting on emotions rather than logic. In this film, Siddharth clearly lacks a support system – this is why he jots down his thoughts in a diary.

Nodidavaru Enantare (Kannada)
Director: Kuldeep Cariappa
Cast: Naveen Shankar, Apoorva Bharadwaj, Padmavati Rao, Ayra Krishna
Runtime: 136 minutes
Storyline: Siddharth is an existentialist who leaves his home in pursuit of the unknown and his quest to find himself

Siddharth decides to pursue his ambition of being a writer and finds purpose when he befriends a woman (Apoorva Bharadwaj once again eases into a complex character) who has also left home to understand what she wants from life.

Nodidavaru Enantare resonates the most when it discusses people's dilemma of choosing between temporary pleasure and permanency. Naveen Shankar owns the movie. As a man beaten by life at every turn, he looks the part, with his physical transformation enhancing the weight of his character. In several scenes, he is left to convey his emotions through silence, and the actor does a splendid job of making us feel for him.

Kuldeep shines with his cinematic craft. The long scene where Siddharth confronts his mother is pure drama. We are glued to the intensity on display, and that's a sign of a promising filmmaker. Staying true to the title, he has made a film without getting bogged down by what people would think.

Nodidavaru Enantare is currently running in theatres

Tracing the evolution of Modernism in India

Touch of class A view of the Maharaja's office with design pieces by Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann. TAIMUR HASSAN COLLECTION.

India has always been viewed by the West as the home of bejewelled Maharajas, caparisoned elephants and the like. Yet, Modernism made inroads in the country long before it was truly acknowledged. Eckart Muthesius and Manik Bagh - Pioneering Modernism in India hosted by the Museum of Art and Photography (MAP) debunks that notion with a curation of images which chronicle this evolution.

Manik Bagh was the name chosen by the erstwhile Maharaja of Indore Yashwant Rao Holkar II and his wife, Maharani Sanyogita for their residential palace. The couple, who had a progressive world view, had commissioned Eckart Muthesius, a German architect and interior designer to carry out its construction in 1929.

The royals were inspired by the Bauhaus movement trending in Germany at the time and chose Eckart, a friend of theirs, to execute the project. When the palace was completed in 1933, it served as a brilliant example of the cohesion of Western aesthetics and Indian architecture and culture. The interiors were fashioned and furnished in the art deco style prevalent at the time. Products from some of the best names in crystal, lacquerware and furnishings, enhanced the palace as did contemporary works of art.

Curated by Raffael Dedo Gadebusch, the exhibition presents rare photographs of Manik Bagh and its royal occupants as captured by Eckart, Man Ray and Emil Leitner. Watercolour paintings and design studies detailing the palace's development are also on display.

Following the Maharani's demise, projects linked to Manik Bagh such as an expansive garden for meditation and a riverboat were left incomplete, as the Maharaja slowly distanced himself from the public eye. Plans and sketches of these projects are also on display at the exhibition.

While the finished work may seem staid by prevailing standards, at the time of its completion, Manik Bagh reflected modernistic trends and viewers can discern the shift in artistic sensibilities.

Eckart Muthesius and Manik Bagh - Pioneering Modernism in India is on at the Museum of Art and Photography till March 30, 2025

Union Minister sparks row with 'casteist' comment

'High-born' individuals could lead Tribal Affairs Ministry, says Suresh Gopi; Kerala parties announce protest, Congress asks him to step down

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The ruling and Opposition fronts in Kerala sought to provoke a political and social uproar over Union Minister of State for Petroleum Suresh Gopi's comment that "high-born" individuals could lead the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs rather than a member from such communities, as has been the norm.

Mr. Gopi, who represents the Thrissur Lok Sabha constituency, seemingly stirred the pot by remarking at a National Democratic Alliance (NDA) election rally in New Delhi that the customary political approach was a systemic anomaly requiring rectification. He said a "Brahmin or Naidu" could also lead the department laudably. Similarly, Mr. Gopi said that a person from the tribal community could head programmes for welfare of "upper castes".

Suresh Gopi

His audience were mainly Keralites in New Delhi. He also revealed that as a Rajya Sabha member in 2016, he had conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi his desire to head the Tribal Affairs Ministry. Mr. Gopi appeared to hastily retract his contentious remark when it went viral on social and conventional media, sparking a political controversy. He accused the media of cherry-picking portions of his speech to wilfully distort his words. "If anyone has objections, I withdraw my statement," he told press-persons in New Delhi.

CPI protest today

Parties of both the Left Democratic Front and United Democratic Front condemned the remark. Communist Party of India (CPI) State secretary Binoy Viswam announced Statewide protests on Monday. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Viswam dismissed Mr. Gopi's attempt to retract the "casteist slur" aimed at marginalised communities.

He stated Mr. Gopi had become the town crier for the Sangh Parivar's effort to reinstate the revanchist and sickening Varna system.

K. Radhakrishnan, MP and CPI(M) leader who formerly served as the Kerala Minister for the Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes, said Mr. Gopi's words echoed the Sangh Parivar's aim to re-establish caste as the essential selfhood of an Indian citizen and a yardstick for their respective political roles and social status in society. "In a sense, Mr. Gopi has questioned the suitability of Droupadi Murmu, a member of a marginalised community, for high office," he said.

Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan said political propriety demanded that Mr. Gopi step down as Minister. "He has sought to divide and ostracise citizens on the regressive basis of caste. He should have no say in governance," the Congress leader told *The Hindu*.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders, including tribal leader C.K. Janu, declined to comment. Nevertheless, a BJP leader opined privately that Mr. Gopi's trail of political gaffes, including on sensitive subjects such as caste, did not augur well for the NDA's push to win over Backward and Dalit communities in Kerala.

Face of 'Bengaluru South' dist., Channapatna will change soon, says DKS

D.K. Suresh, former MP, and C.P. Yogeshwar, MLA, taking a ride at Kanva dam in Channapatna on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday said that the face of Channapatna and 'Bengaluru South' district will change in the next three years.

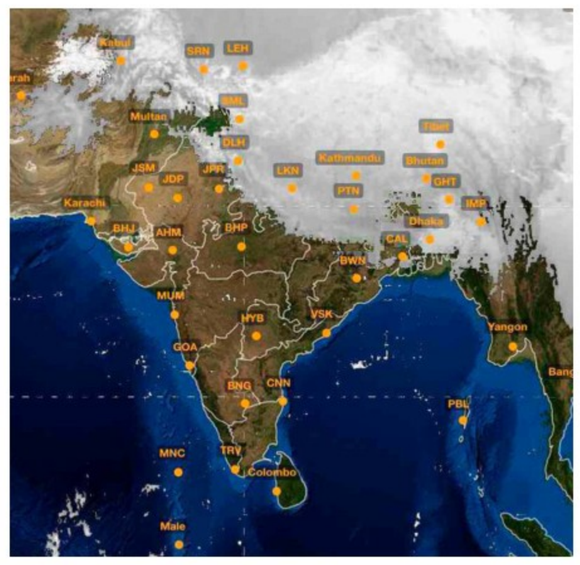
Speaking at an event organised to thank the party workers and leaders for achieving a victory in the Channapatna bypolls, the Minister said, "The district has strengthened the Congress by electing four MLAs. We will change the face of Channapatna and Bengaluru South district together with development".

"I don't want to criticise anyone. The people of the constituency have replied to the JD(S) and the BJP leaders such as H.D. Deve Gowda, H.D. Kumaraswamy, and B.S. Yediyurappa. Your message is reverbrating across the country. You have shown that the people of Channapatna can't be taken for a ride," he added.

C.P. Yogeshwar, MLA, D.K. Suresh, former MP, and other leaders spoke at the event and invited JD(S) workers to join the Congress.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Dense fog conditions very likely in isolated pockets of Punjab, HaryanaChandigarh-Delhi, Bihar, Odisha and Assam & Meghalaya. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning very likely at isolated places over Rajasthan.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	28.0	16.8	Kozhikode	—	35.4	26.0
Ahmedabad	—	29.8	12.0	Kurnool	—	36.9	19.7
Aizawl	—	27.8	11.5	Lucknow	—	29.2	12.6
Allahabad	—	31.5	13.0	Madurai	—	34.4	23.9
Bengaluru	—	31.5	16.5	Mangaluru	—	33.1	22.8
Bhopal	—	28.5	10.2	Mumbai	—	30.2	19.4
Bhubaneswar	—	34.9	22.3	Mysuru	—	32.6	17.0
Chandigarh	—	23.5	12.4	New Delhi	—	21.6	11.4
Chennai	—	31.7	22.1	Patna	—	28.4	15.6
Coimbatore	—	34.0	23.0	Port Blair	—	30.3	20.7
Dehradun	—	25.0	8.5	Puducherry	—	31.5	23.7
Gangtok	—	12.5	6.4	Pune	—	36.0	19.2
Goa	—	—	—	Raipur	—	34.8	19.8
Guwahati	—	26.3	12.2	Ranchi	—	29.0	15.5
Hubballi	—	35.0	17.0	Shillong	—	18.0	4.0
Hyderabad	—	34.0	18.0	Shimla	—	16.0	4.0
Imphal	—	23.4	12.1	Srinagar	—	6.0	2.5
Jaipur	—	25.0	15.7	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.8	25.0
Kochi	—	32.6	26.2	Tiruchi	—	32.5	23.6
Kohima	—	18.6	5.2	Vijayawada	—	32.4	21.4
Kolkata	—	26.6	22.1	Visakhapatnam	—	30.7	22.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.25	..68	24	... 150	...125	
Bengaluru	.11	..32	96	..... —	94	
Chennai	.17	..—	45	 53	58	
Delhi	.19	..48	72	... 375	...262	
Hyderabad	...5	107	..6	 78	...118	
Kolkata	...7	..37	..3	 74	...137	
Lucknow	.17	..56	66	... 287	...216	
Mumbai	.32	..52	30	... 194	...180	
Pune	.25	125	62	... 140	...119	
Visakhapatnam	...8	..72	31	... 119	...132	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Meghalaya recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 365 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 21

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

'Kerala should declare itself backward for federal aid'

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Union Minister of State for Fisheries George Kurian's remark that Kerala should declare itself a socially and economically backward State if it were to receive a part of the Union Budget allocation for less developed States has sparked a political row.

His comments have arguably emerged as a central piece of campaigns by the Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] against the BJP ahead of the local body elections in Kerala.

Mr. Kurian said Kerala could justify its claim to get Union budgetary allocations for relatively disadvantaged States only if it declared itself a socially and economically backward province with no roads, education or a dependable public health system. Mr. Kurian claimed the Union government had concentrated on Bihar to catalyse flood mitigation efforts in the Koshi basin, which recurrently hobbled the State's agrarian economy.

He noted that the Union Budget for the current fiscal had prioritised the eastern States, particularly Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh. Kerala's turn would come, he said.

Mr. Kurian also denied that coalition politics and electoral priorities impacted the Union Budget, which allegedly passed over non-BJP-ruled States, including Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Beyond the buzzword

How mentorship and coaching can help transform the Indian higher education system

John J. Kennedy

Education, often regarded as the foundation of societal progress, thrives not only on structured curricula but also on other types of guidance and support provided to learners and educators alike. Two indispensable components of this are mentorship and coaching. While these terms frequently echo in academic discourses and institutional meetings, their implementation often falls short. Against this backdrop, it may be worthwhile to understand the relevance, challenges, and potential of mentorship and coaching in India's education system, supplemented by global perspectives and evidence-based insights.

Distinct roles

Mentorship and coaching, though often used interchangeably, have distinct definitions and roles in education. Mentorship involves a long-term relationship where an experienced individual provides guidance and support to mentees, fostering their personal and professional growth.

Conversely, coaching is more goal-oriented and performance-driven, focusing on enhancing specific skills through structured sessions.

Both are vital for a comprehensive educational experience, benefiting students and teachers. According to a study published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, mentorship contributes significantly to students' academic success, emotional well-being, and career readiness.

Another study published in the *Harvard Educational Review* (2020) has found that coaching has improved teachers' teaching efficacy and job satisfaction.

In India, however, incorporating mentorship and coaching in educational institutions remains sporadic. Many institutions lack the awareness or resources to implement these frameworks effectively.

Globally, institutions in the U.S., the U.K., and other nations have demonstrated the transformative potential of mentorship and coaching. For instance, Stanford University's "First-Generation Mentorship Programme" has reported a 25% increase in student retention rates among its participants. Similarly, the University of Oxford's peer-mentoring initiative for educators has led to a 30% improvement in teaching effectiveness, as per their 2021 annual report. In the corporate-academic partnership realm, initiatives such as IBM's "SkillsBuild" in collaboration with universities have shown remarkable success.

Benefits

When properly implemented, mentorship and coaching create a ripple effect of benefits. Personalised guidance enhances learning outcomes and helps students identify their strengths and address weaknesses, leading to improved academic performance. A supportive mentor can help students build emotional resilience and navigate challenges like stress and anxiety, which are prevalent in the highly competitive educational environments today. For teachers, coaching provides actionable feedback and professional development, ultimately enhancing classroom engagement and student outcomes, thus empowering them. Mentorship bridges the gap between academia and industry, ensuring students are better prepared for real-world challenges and career-ready.

Several steps are imperative to foster a culture of mentorship and coaching in India. First, intervention at the policy level is crucial. Educational policies must mandate mentorship programmes and allocate dedicated funding. Second, regular workshops and certifications can equip educators with the skills needed for effective mentorship. Third, awareness campaigns highlighting success stories and global best practices can inspire institutions to adopt these frameworks. Finally, using technology and digital platforms can democratise mentorship by providing students and teachers access to experts from around the globe.

Integrating mentorship and coaching into the Indian higher education system holds transformative potential.

These interventions can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, foster emotional intelligence, and create a workforce that is not only competent but also adaptable. Moreover, such programmes can position India as a global leader in educational innovation.

Mentorship and coaching, therefore, are not mere buzzwords but essential elements of a meaningful education. By learning from global successes and addressing local challenges, Indian educational institutions can pave the way for an inclusive and impactful educational ecosystem.

The writer is a Professor and Dean, Christ University, Bengaluru.

Without warrant

Police seizure of journalists' phones in Chennai is nothing but harassment

The seizure of mobile phones from some journalists in the name of investigating how details of the First Information Report (FIR) pertaining to the rape committed on the Anna University campus in Chennai last December is wholly unwarranted and possibly illegal. The Special Investigating Team (SIT), appointed by the Madras High Court to take over the probe, appears to believe that the source of the alleged disclosure could be mediapersons who may have downloaded the FIR from a national crime network database. What makes the episode an instance of harassment is that the journalists were subjected to intrusive and distasteful questioning. Instead of probing how and why the FIR leaked, the SIT is trying to find out whether they had put it in the public domain. The High Court had already been told that the FIR was inadvertently uploaded, because of a technical issue, on the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems before being taken down. The High Court had directed a departmental inquiry into the leaking of the FIR (the direction has now been stayed by the Supreme Court). What was a direction to find out the source of a departmental leak has been transformed into a roving inquiry as to who may have circulated it in the public domain. Unless the reporters summoned by the police had themselves reported or posted details revealing the survivor's identity, there is no reason for seizing their phones.

Based on the High Court referring to the alleged circulation of details about the survivor's identity, a separate FIR has been registered under Section 72 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which makes it an offence to publish any detail that may lead to the survivor's identity becoming known. Presumably, the SIT is trying to trace those who made such publication, but the real question is whether the details were actually published in any newspaper, TV channel or social media post. If such a disclosure existed, the police should be summoning those in charge of those outlets or handles instead of calling all those who downloaded material from the Internet. A larger question is whether the police have the blanket authority to seize mobile phones or devices without judicial authorisation or any credible reason that an offence has been committed. The Supreme Court has already asked the Centre to frame guidelines for such seizures, including the need for a warrant and an element of proportionality. An unguided power to seize phones threatens the privacy of individuals and, in the case of the media, is a brazen intimidation tactic and an attempt to identify and harass their sources and an attack on freedom of expression. The police should not only return the seized phones immediately but also limit their probe to specific instances of publication or disclosure of details that compromised the survivor's identity.

Crisis in Congo

For peace, the country should take Tutsis into confidence

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is no stranger to civil conflicts. But the latest advances made by M23, a rebel coalition, capturing the mineral-rich city of Goma, is a humiliating setback for the Congolese government, which had vowed to crush the rebellion in the east. M23, which takes its name from a failed peace agreement signed between a Tutsi-led rebel group and the Congolese government on March 23, 2009, claims it is fighting to protect the rights of Congo's Tutsi ethnic minority. Congo and UN experts say neighbouring Rwanda, ruled by a Tutsi-led government, is backing M23. In 2012, shortly after it was founded, M23 seized much of Goma. But it withdrew as Rwanda came under international pressure. There was a short spell of calmness with M23 rebels agreeing to join the Congolese army in return for state protection for the Tutsis. But in 2021, the group took up arms again and started the latest spell of fighting. After Goma fell last week, Paul Kagame, Rwanda's President, called for a ceasefire but with little impact. Congo, on the other side, has termed the fall of Goma "a declaration of war" and vowed a "vigorous military response".

The crisis in Congo can be traced to the Rwandan genocide in 1994 in which about 8,00,000 people, mostly Tutsis, were massacred by ethnic Hutu militias. When tens of thousands of Hutus fled Rwanda for Congo in the mid-1990s after the fall of the genocidal regime in Kigali, Congo's local Tutsis took up arms in 'self-defence'. Rwanda has made military incursions into Congo in the past, accusing it of harbouring those who were complicit in the genocide. Today's Rwanda is much stronger than what it was in 2012. Mr. Kagame, a former guerrilla leader, has modernised the economy and built a disciplined military. Rwanda has also developed close ties with western countries, who see Mr. Kagame as a force of stability in an unstable region as well as a major contributor of forces to UN missions. So, unlike in 2012, Mr. Kagame seems to be making his moves from a position of strength this time. The conflict has exposed Congo's inherent vulnerabilities and Rwanda's insecurities and ambitions. But it is also a testament to the unresolved ethnic anxieties of the region, 30 years after the genocide was brought to an end. The international community should push Mr. Kagame to rein in the rebels. Congo should also realise that for long-term peace, it should take action against the genocide-linked groups that operate from its soil and take the Tutsi minorities, for whom the memories of the massacre are still fresh, into confidence.

Beyond tax cuts, a closer read of the Union Budget

Amarendu Nandy

is an Assistant Professor (Economics Area) at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ranchi

The Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman's presentation of the Union Budget on Saturday, February 1, was against the backdrop of pressing macroeconomic challenges – persistently high taxes and unemployment squeezing the middle-income class, subdued private investment, mounting external vulnerabilities that threaten to derail the growth story, and a looming fiscal overhang. While the Finance Minister laid out an ambitious road map for Viksit Bharat, spanning agriculture, manufacturing, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), social welfare, and infrastructure, the Budget's policy announcements and fiscal plans need closer scrutiny.

Targets that raise questions

First, the fiscal consolidation target of 4.4% of GDP in FY26 is a key highlight of the Budget. However, achieving this target hinges on ambitious revenue projections, including a 11.2% growth in total tax revenues and a 14.4% increase in income tax revenues compared to FY25 estimates. These assumptions appear overly optimistic given the significant tax cuts announced in the Budget and the prevailing economic headwinds such as softening domestic consumption and weakening external demand. Much will also depend on the success of the second asset monetisation plan (2025-30), announced in the Budget. The underperformance of the previous asset monetisation programme raises valid concerns. Furthermore, the estimated ₹11.54 lakh crore in net market borrowings risks crowding out private capital at a critical juncture when credit demand remains tepid. Achieving the ambitious revenue targets will require improved tax buoyancy, more efficient tax administration, and realistic asset monetisation strategies to ensure that the fiscal consolidation plan remains on track.

Second, the revisions in personal income-tax rates and slabs under the new tax regime, exempting incomes up to ₹12 lakh from tax (after factoring in the rebate benefit), and significantly reducing tax liabilities across various income brackets, offer welcome relief to middle-income taxpayers.

However, while these changes are likely to boost disposable income, they shall come at a cost – of ₹1 lakh crore in foregone direct tax revenue, which, in turn, could constrain the government's ability to fund critical developmental initiatives. The tax-base erosion also comes when household savings have shown a structural decline over the past decade, dropping to 18.4% of GDP in FY23 (Economic Survey 2024-25). This raises pressing questions about the long-term sustainability of these tax cuts, particularly when public investments in infrastructure and social welfare remain critical to drive inclusive economic growth.

Many of the measures, in manufacturing, agriculture and climate action, lack rounded strategies

Third, on the manufacturing front, the Budget reiterates India's ambition to emerge as a global manufacturing powerhouse. The Economic Survey 2024-25 flagged India's underperformance in manufacturing, which accounts for a mere 17% of GDP. While production-linked incentives (PLIs) have shown moderate success in sectors such as electronics, their scalability and long-term impact remain uncertain. In that light, the Budget announcements on enhanced credit facilities for MSMEs and the launch of a National Manufacturing Mission aimed at improving ease of doing business, to foster a future-ready workforce, and promote clean-tech manufacturing, are important steps. The revision of MSME classification criteria – increasing investment limits by 2.5x and doubling turnover thresholds– may improve scale economies. However, the measures fall short of addressing core competitiveness issues such as regulatory inefficiencies, infrastructure gaps, and low innovation capacity. The absence of concrete measures to boost industrial research and development – currently at a dismal 0.64% of GDP – undermines India's ability to compete with innovation-driven economies such as China and Germany. While the Budget's focus on manufacturing is a step in the right direction, achieving global competitiveness will require deeper structural reforms and sustained investment in innovation and infrastructure.

The gaps remain in agriculture

Fourth, agriculture, a key pillar of the economy, received significant attention through initiatives such as the Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana and the National Mission on High-Yielding Seeds. These measures are with the aim of enhancing productivity and climate resilience, which are critical for food security. The increase in the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loan limit from ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh, along with targeted interventions in 100 low-productivity districts, signals a strategic pivot from blanket subsidies to precision support, empowering farmers with greater financial flexibility. However, the measures fall short of addressing systemic inefficiencies in agricultural markets. The Budget lays an emphasis on credit enhancements, yet the focus on short-term loans perpetuates the dependency of farmers on debt without addressing the issues of price volatility or market access. Moreover, the absence of concrete measures to promote agricultural exports – particularly as India eyes leadership in millets and natural farming – represents a missed opportunity.

Fifth, while the Budget introduces some promising measures for the external sector, significant gaps remain unaddressed. Services exports, particularly in IT and business process outsourcing, continue to grow at a robust 10.5% CAGR, but budgetary efforts to diversify the export portfolio remain insufficient. Trade facilitation initiatives such as Bharat Trade Net (BTN) and export credit support for MSMEs, which were announced in the Budget, are positive steps but lack the scale required to tackle India's persistent trade deficits. Moreover, the challenges posed by the depreciation of the rupee and declining forex reserves require a more ambitious export strategy. The fiscal push to value-added sectors such as pharmaceuticals, electronics, renewable energy, and high-value agricultural products could have strengthened India's position in global supply chains and enhanced export competitiveness.

Not a transformative push

Finally, while the Budget signals intent on climate action and clean energy, its financial commitments reveal a cautious, incremental approach rather than a transformative push. The Budget's focus on supply-chain resilience – through incentives for lithium-ion battery recycling, duty exemptions on critical minerals, and support for domestic solar photovoltaic and battery manufacturing – is a pragmatic move to reduce import dependence. However, without a parallel investment in grid modernisation, energy storage, and industrial decarbonisation, the transition to a low-carbon economy will remain fragmented.

The Budget's fiscal outlays will eventually be judged by how effectively they address the fundamental trade-offs of Indian growth: how to unleash private enterprise while ensuring inclusive development; how to boost consumption without compromising savings, and how to accelerate growth while maintaining macroeconomic stability. Ultimately, the credibility of execution and the government's willingness to course-correct where necessary will matter.

The views expressed are personal

A Budget that is forward-looking and growth-oriented

Vijay Sankar

is Vice President, The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

The Union Budget 2025-26 is in line with the government's sustained efforts over the past few years to bolster economic growth and development. The provisions of the Budget indicate the continuation of the government's strategic approach toward economic expansion, fiscal prudence, and sectoral growth.

The multiplier effects of the IT cuts

One of announcements in the Budget that has been most widely welcomed is the significant cut in personal income-tax, with complete exemption extended to individuals earning up to ₹12 lakh per year. This limit will be ₹12.75 lakh for salaried tax-payers because of the standard deduction of ₹75,000. This is a major relief for the middle class, and is expected to have a multiplier effect on the economy.

Higher disposable income can trigger a virtuous cycle of higher consumption, increased demand, and improved business performance. This, in turn, will result in higher indirect tax collections and further economic expansion. Specifically, greater consumer spending will benefit industries such as retail, real estate, and automobile manufacturing, boosting employment opportunities.

Another key highlight of the Budget is the allocation of ₹11.2 lakh crore for capital expenditure for 2025-26, marking an increase of nearly 10% from the actual expenditure in the current fiscal year. This enhanced spending can drive infrastructure development, boost employment generation, and catalyse economic activity across sectors. And, of course, it strengthens the nation's logistical and industrial backbone, ensuring long-term sustainable growth.

In a major thrust to manufacturing, the Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, has also announced the establishment of a National Manufacturing Mission. The aim is to promote the 'Make in India' initiative by covering small, medium, and large industries, providing policy support, execution road maps, and governance frameworks in collaboration with central Ministries and States. The mission is expected to enhance domestic capabilities, reduce import dependency, and encourage foreign investment. While the finer details are yet to be examined, it appears to be a well-conceived initiative. By streamlining regulatory processes, offering incentives, and creating an enabling business environment, this initiative has the potential to position India as a global manufacturing hub.

There is every indication that the approach toward economic expansion, fiscal prudence and sectoral growth will continue

Focus on labour-intensive sectors

In consonance with the government's commitment to job creation, the Budget is focused on labour-intensive sectors such as tourism, food processing and leather. These industries have historically been major employment generators and contribute substantially to India's export earnings. By providing targeted incentives and streamlining regulations, the Budget aims to enhance productivity, improve competitiveness, and create new job opportunities in these sectors.

On the infrastructure side, we see the Budget focus on the maritime sector through the announcement of a new Maritime Development Fund. This will give a boost to the marine economy, especially in the coastal States of the country, creating growth opportunities for both trade and the blue economy-related segments. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has also noted with interest the plan for flight connectivity to 120 new destinations under a modified Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) scheme as this too will enable new economic opportunities in newly connected regions of the country as emerging growth centres.

The Budget has introduced the Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana, a targeted initiative designed to enhance agricultural productivity and improve rural livelihoods. The programme will cover 100 districts with low productivity, moderate crop intensity, and below-average credit access, in partnership with State governments.

This initiative aims to promote crop diversification and sustainable agricultural practices, enhance post-harvest storage infrastructure, improve irrigation facilities, and facilitate access to credit. With an estimated 1.7 crore farmer-beneficiaries, this has the potential to transform the agricultural landscape, increase rural incomes, and drive economic activity in India's hinterlands. Higher rural purchasing power will indirectly benefit the corporate sector, particularly those involved in consumer goods and agricultural supply chains.

Another commendable aspect of the Budget is the government's resolve to reduce the fiscal deficit from 4.8% in 2024-25 to 4.4% in 2025-26. This move is critical as sound public finance management is a *sine qua non* for sustained economic growth. A lower fiscal deficit will help stabilise inflation, increase investor confidence, and create a more robust macroeconomic environment.

A boost to ease of doing business

Rationalisation of the duty structure and simplification of the tariff framework by removing an additional seven tariff rates is a noteworthy announcement. While this may sound simple, it is a major step towards simplification and enhancing ease of doing business for industry. The rationalisation of cess by ensuring that no more than one cess or surcharge would be levied is a crucial step toward ensuring a fairer and more predictable taxation regime, benefiting both industry and consumers. The Budget has also addressed the issue of inverted duty structure for some products, which is a welcome step. This would enhance trade competitiveness and encourage greater participation of domestic firms in global supply chains.

The continued focus on capital expenditure, manufacturing, and labour-intensive sectors, combined with fiscal prudence and income-tax relief, sets the stage for robust growth in the years ahead.

While the finer details of various schemes and policies will need closer examination, the overarching framework of the Budget suggests a proactive, forward-looking, and growth-oriented strategy. As businesses and stakeholders begin to analyse and adapt to the new measures, the true impact of Budget 2025-26 will unfold in the next few months.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A look at the Budget

While making an overall assessment of the Budget, one should not lose sight of the fact that only around 2% of Indians pay income-tax. One wonders what relief has been provided to the millions without any sort of employment. The disproportionate bounty doled out to poll-bound Bihar poses yet another challenge to India's constitutionally mandated federal principles.

Manohar Alembath,
Kannur, Kerala

Health care for all citizens is very important. While the rich can afford medical facilities abroad, it is the middle-income group which finds it difficult to access health insurance policy due to the high GST levied. Further, there is the plight of senior citizens. I retired from a public sector unit and now have bladder cancer.

After undergoing the initial forms of treatment such as tablets, radiation and chemotherapy, I am still not out of the problem. The next stage of treatment I have been advised is to have immunotherapy injections, with each injection costing ₹2,18,500; 17 injections are to be administered in a year. I hoped that the Budget would have had provisions to help cancer patients.

A. Jainulabdeen,
Chennai

NREGA and dues

One fails to understand why there are mounting and pending dues to MGNREGA workers. Unless the lives of the poor are improved, the strong advertisement that it is a new India leading the world, would be an exaggeration. Survival over living is the order of the day. The government seems to have all the money for freebies, but no money to pay wages. What a sorry state of affairs.

Balasubramaniam Pavani,
Secunderabad

Corrections & Clarifications

Wheat is a *rabi* crop and not *kharif* crop, as mentioned in a report, "Warmer than normal February could hurt wheat, fruit, vegetables, says IMD" (some editions, February 1, 2025).

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Budget 2025 overlooks joblessness

Prasenjit Bose
Economist and activist

The previous Budget, presented in July 2024 after the Lok Sabha election, had accorded priority to employment and skill development, given the nature of the election mandate. The Finance Minister had announced a Prime Minister's Package of five schemes and initiatives to facilitate job and internship opportunities for 4.1 crore youth over a five-year period with a central outlay of ₹2 lakh crore. However, the Budget speech delivered in Parliament on February 1, 2025, did not refer to the Prime Minister's Package even once. The document on implementation of Budget 2024-25 announcements states that a "draft Cabinet note on Employment Linked Incentive scheme is under finalisation" and "several meetings have been held with the Ministry of Labour and CII to discuss the relationship between capital expenditure and employment generation". In other words, the future of the scheme looks bleak.

Deflationary budget

The September 2024 report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) revealed that in 2023-24, the youth unemployment rate (for those aged 15-29 years) had increased to 10.2% and the unemployment rate among graduates was 13%. Time series data from the PLFS show that the share of the workforce engaged in regular or salaried employment in the post-pandemic period has shrunk, while the share engaged in agriculture and informal self-employment has risen.

The latest Economic Survey also shows that average real earnings of self-employed male workers in India fell from ₹9,454 in 2017-18 to ₹8,591 in 2023-24. The monthly real wages of regular/salaried male workers also fell from an average of ₹12,665 in 2017-18 to ₹11,858 in 2023-24. Surplus labour inundating the job market, combined with high food inflation, have severely squeezed the real incomes and livelihoods of an overwhelming majority of India's workforce. For a Finance Minister to overlook this is disingenuous.

The advanced estimates of GDP have already projected a decline of the real GDP growth rate to 6.4% in 2024-25 from 8.2% last year. In keeping with this, there is a slowdown in the Centre's net tax revenues in 2024-25. With the Finance Minister keen on adhering to the fiscal consolidation path, the axe has fallen on government expenditure. Total expenditure is now likely to be over ₹1 lakh crore short of Budget Estimates (BE), with capital expenditure falling short of the target by over ₹92,000 crore.

Public expenditure on rural and urban development, agriculture, education, food subsidy, energy, transport, and health are all being axed. Among centrally sponsored schemes, the Revised Estimates (RE) for the Jal Jeevan Mission and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (both rural and urban) show declines of ₹47,469 crore and ₹38,575 crore, respectively, from their BE. The expenditure on MGNREGA was cut in the BE itself by ₹3,654 crore from the previous year. Such deep cuts in budgeted capital and welfare expenditures would have a dampening effect on investment and consumption, especially in rural areas.

The Finance Minister has sought to counterbalance the deflationary impact of these expenditure cuts by enhancing the annual rebate for income tax payers from ₹7 lakh to ₹12 lakh from 2025-26. Data from the Income Tax Department show that only around 2.8 crore individuals had paid positive taxes in the assessment year 2023-24, out of the 7.54 crore filing income tax returns. The income tax relief for next year would therefore go to 2.8 crore individuals, who form only around 22% of India's salaried workforce. For the rest who are faced with dwindling real incomes, there is nothing on offer.

The Finance Minister has estimated the revenue foregone on account of the income tax rebate to be ₹1 lakh crore. Instead, a cut of a similar magnitude in indirect taxes, such as the exorbitant excise duties on fuel or the central GST rates on mass consumption goods, could have provided relief to the entire class of working people. It is well known that the consumption propensity of wage earners is higher than that of the profit earners.

The average daily wage rate actually received by a MGNREGA worker (as per data provided by Ministry of Rural Development dashboard) has increased from ₹200.71 in 2019-20 to ₹252.31 in 2024-25. The national floor level minimum wage for unskilled workers in agriculture, in contrast, has been set at ₹452 in 2024-25. A well deserved, substantial hike in the MGNREGA wages in the Union Budget alongside an increase in rural development outlays would have led to increased consumption demand in the rural areas. The consumption effect of income tax breaks, in contrast, would be far more limited and concentrated in urban areas.

Running out of ideas

The latest Economic Survey cites a private sector research report to show how the after tax profit-to-GDP ratio of Nifty 500 companies surged from 2.1% in 2020-21 to 4.8% in 2023-24. While the deep corporate tax cut of September 2019 played a vital role in this profit surge, it has neither translated into higher levels of private corporate investment, nor employment generation.

Yet, the 2025 Union Budget has relied upon another tax break, this time for income tax payers, to inject demand into the economy, even while cutting capital and welfare expenditures to compress the fiscal deficit. This is unlikely to generate higher levels of economic growth and employment and raise the living standards of the vast majority of the working people. It is evident that the government has run out of ideas on the economic front.

> Tax breaks for income tax payers along with cuts in capital and welfare expenditure are unlikely to raise the living standards of the vast majority of working people

Singer, balladeer, Maoist sympathiser

A political row has broken out in Telangana over Gaddar and the Padma awards

STATE OF PLAY

Ravi Reddy
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A political row has broken out in Telangana after the Revanth Reddy government's proposal to confer a Padma award on Gaddar alias Gummadi Vithal Rao – a revolutionary balladeer, renowned folk singer, and also a Maoist sympathiser – was ignored by the Centre.

The Chief Minister was peeved that his government had recommended five names – Gaddar, educationist Chukka Ramaiah, poet Andesri, poet-singer Gorati Venkanna, and poet-historian Jayadheer Tirumala Rao – for various Padma awards and not one of them made it to the final list. He termed it an insult to the "four crore people of Telangana".

The issue escalated when the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay, commented on the State government's decision to recommend Gaddar. He said, "Giving a Padma award to those who championed Naxalism is like spitting on the graves of martyred police officers and BJP *karyakartas* who fell victim to [the violence propagated by those who follow] this ideology. It is a betrayal of the families of these brave officers. How can the State even consider honouring a person investigated by the NIA (National Investigation Agency) for fuelling violence?"

The State government argued that the names were sent after careful consideration of the contributions of the five individuals in the fields of art, culture, education, people's movements, and protection of tribal culture. It said that their roles in the movement for

Statehood could not be ignored. An angry Chief Minister said that he would write to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the issue.

Since the creation of Telangana in 2014, one Bharat Ratna (to former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao), three Padma Vibhushan, seven Padma Bhushan, and 41 Padma Shri awards have been presented to people from the State. But the Telangana government has alleged that there is discrimination against the State. While some States have managed to secure more than 10 Padma awards, it argued that Telangana received only two this time – a Padma Vibhushan for gastroenterologist Dr. Duvvur Nageshwar Reddy and a Padma Shri for Manda Krishna, the founder-president of the Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti.

While Gaddar, who died in 2023, was a Maoist sympathiser, he is a popular figure in Telangana. Gaddar, a Dalit, was an engineering dropout. He was attracted to the Maoist movement in the 1970s and spent over a decade underground working as its cultural ambassador. Often referred to as 'Praja Yuddha Nauka' (war ship of the people's movement), Gaddar's role in the Telangana movement between 2009 and 2014 is acknowledged not just by the people, but also by political parties.

In fact, Mr. Modi paid Gaddar glowing tributes in his condolence message to the balladeer's family on August 21, 2023. Mr. Modi's letter read: "The themes of his poems and folk songs in Telugu reflected the challenges faced by the disadvantaged sections of the society. His creative works also provided encouragement to the people. He always remained passionate about the progress of Telangana. His contribution towards revitalising a traditional art form will be remembered by the people."

This is why Mr. Bandi Sanjay's comments have not only angered the Congress, but also divided the State BJP unit and put them in a spot. While some party cadres support his stand, others point out that the Prime Minister, too, has acknowledged the activist's contribution. They also worry that by openly claiming that the Centre decides who should get the awards, Mr. Bandi Sanjay has created the impression that favouritism takes precedence over merit.

There is a clear political angle to the decisions too. The Centre reportedly felt that by recommending certain people who were active during the Statehood movement, the Revanth Reddy government was trying to woo the cadres of the Bharat Rashtra Samiti. Gaddar's daughter, Vennela, was given a Congress ticket in the Assembly elections. She lost the election and is now chairperson of the Telangana Samskruthika Saradhi, a cultural wing of the State government.

While the Centre may have a point, Mr. Bandi Sanjay's remarks have not only provided ammunition for the Telangana government, but also divided the BJP. More crucially, they seek to undermine the contributions of a man who fought relentlessly for the rights of the marginalised.

How much in subsidies do fossil fuels receive?

Estimates range from less than $1 trillion to $7 trillion depending on the ways in which subsidies are defined

DATA POINT

Hannah Ritchie

If we want to tackle climate change, we need to move away from fossil fuels to low-carbon energy sources. This transition is a lot easier if these sources are cheaper than fossil fuels. However, fossil fuels are often subsidised, reducing the short-term economic incentives to switch.

Because subsidies can be defined in different ways – production, consumption, explicit, implicit – people can quote different numbers to this question, ranging from hundreds of billions of U.S. dollars to as much as $7 trillion.

Let's start with explicit subsidies: government payments to make fossil fuels cheaper. These payments can either go towards fossil fuel producers so that the extraction and refining cost is lower (called 'production subsidies') or to consumers so they can buy fossil fuels cheaper than the market price (called 'consumption subsidies'). Global explicit subsidies for fossil fuels amounted to around $1.5 trillion in 2022. That is equivalent to the entire GDP of countries like Russia or Australia.

Around 80% of these explicit subsidies went to consumers and the rest into fossil fuel production. Global subsidies ramped up in 2022 because the price of energy spiked due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Consumption subsidies roughly doubled from 2021 to 2022 and fell back to their previous level in 2023 **(Chart 1)**.

In 2022, the price of gas increased by as much as 400%. Many countries implemented mechanisms to support consumers, such as putting a price cap on gas and electricity. Now, this money was going towards subsidising fossil fuels. But it's perhaps not quite as 'explicit' a subsidy as the name might infer; the focus of governments was to make energy affordable for households and businesses, not specifically fossil fuels. Taking these subsidies away without cheap and available alternative energy sources would push some households into fuel poverty.

So far, we have focused on subsidies at a global level, but there are huge differences between countries. In **Map 2,** you can see the level of fossil fuel subsidies given per person. This includes production and consumption subsidies, and it is shown for 2021, before the energy crisis.

Unsurprisingly, the countries that gave the largest subsidies are large fossil fuel producers. Major oil producers, such as Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, Libya, and Algeria, spent more than $500 per person (sometimes over $1,000) to support fossil fuel production. These subsidies can represent more than 10% of GDP. Countries across Europe, North and South America, and East Asia typically gave less than $100 per person, and in Africa and South Asia, it's even less than $20 – and sometimes close to zero. For India, the amount was around $3 in 2021, down from $9 in 2015.

You might have heard $7 trillion quoted as the amount of subsidies going towards fossil fuels. That's more than four times the $1.5 trillion I mentioned at the beginning. That's because it includes implicit subsidies – the societal costs of burning fossil fuels. When we burn fossil fuels, we cause local air pollution and drive climate change.

Chart 3 breaks down the $7 trillion figure into its components. Explicit subsidies (18%) include consumption subsidies (14%), production subsidies (4%), and foregone VAT (5%). Implicit subsidies (77%) arise from externalities, such as air pollution (30%), climate change (30%), and road use impacts (17%). A section in the graphic outlines different approaches to reducing subsidies, such as cutting producer/consumer support, implementing pollution or carbon taxes, and using road taxes or congestion pricing.

The low-down on fossil fuel subsidies

The charts are sourced from Hannah Ritchie's "How much in subsidies do fossil fuels receive?", published in Our World In Data. She is the deputy editor and science outreach lead at Our World In Data

Chart 1: Global explicit consumption subsidies for fossil fuels between 2010 to 2023. tn: Trillion, bn: Billion

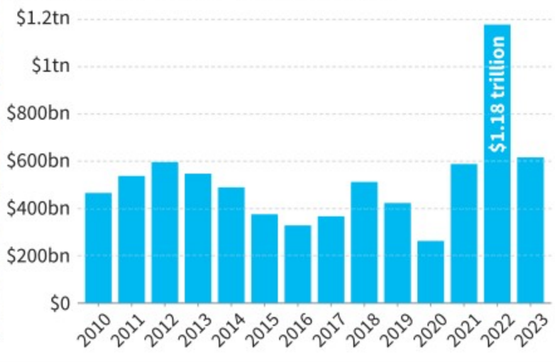


Chart 2: Fossil-fuel subsidies per capita, 2021

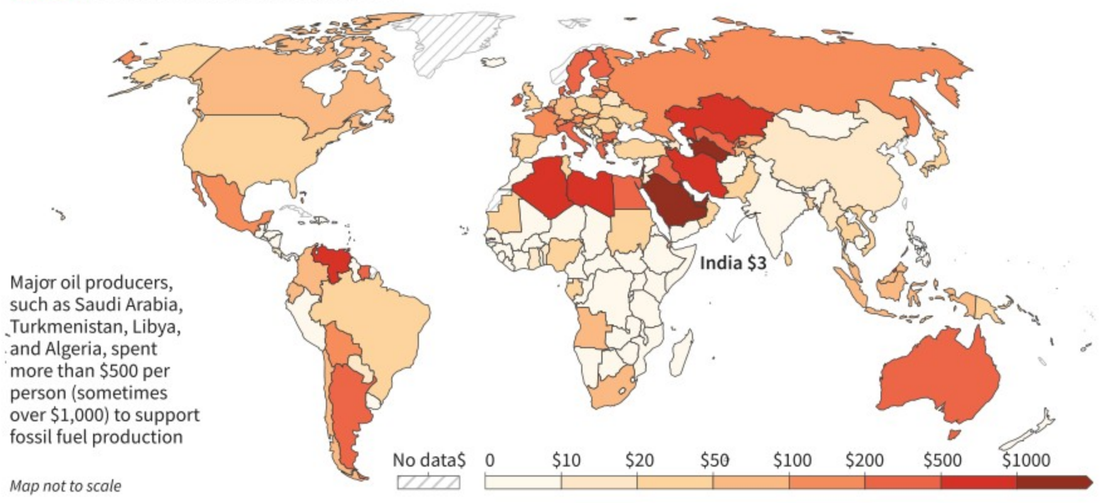
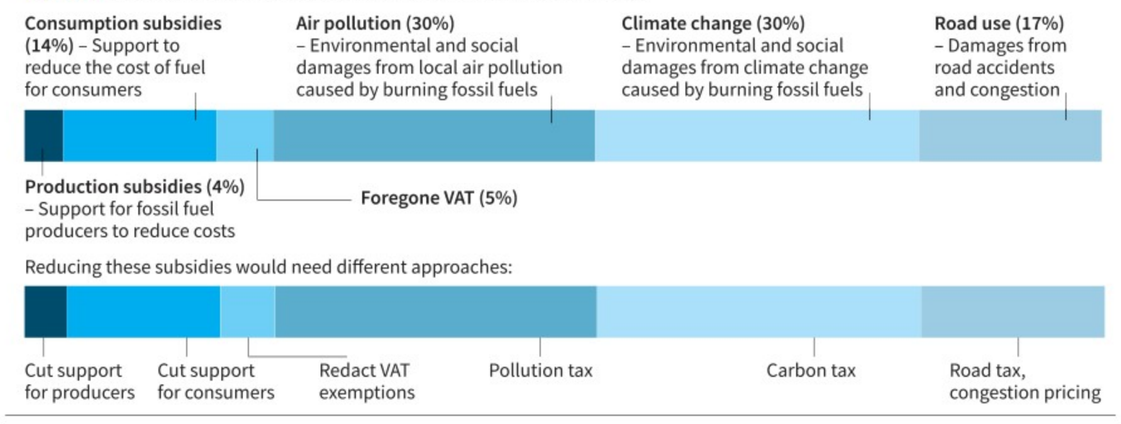


Chart 3: The chart breaks down the $7 trillion figure into its components



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 3, 1975

Panel suggests scrapping of tutorial system

New Delhi, February 2: Tutorial system in Indian universities, particularly in the Delhi University, is in danger of being discontinued because of lack of interest evidenced in it by both lecturers and students.

This is borne out by the report of a high-power committee of leading educationists, appointed by the University Grants Commission, to go into the system. The report, which is just out, has recommended that under the existing circumstances, it is best to scrap the system.

The scheme of tutorial and preceptorial was instituted in the Delhi University in 1958 with funds provided by the Ford Foundation. It was intended to be an experiment to be conducted for five years. Its main purpose was "to foster a system of education by discussion and thus to meet the need for developing the capacity for intellectual initiative and self-reliance on the part of the students."

The committee met lecturers, principals of colleges, representatives of the Delhi University Teachers' Association and the Delhi University Students' Union and a number of students. A questionnaire was prepared to elicit information from them. It was the general view of these people that although the scheme as planned originally by the University was a useful one, it had generated into a total farce.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 3, 1925

'Flu' epidemic in Britain

The London correspondent of *The Statesmen* cables to that paper that Britain is in the grip of a mild form of "flu". The epidemic has seriously affected offices and workshops, which are very short-handed, but, so far, few deaths have been recorded.

The complaint is largely of an intestinal form, and doctors state that the epidemic, which is due to a mysterious triennium cycle, is likely to reach its zennith in February. It will not be surprising if a large number of football matches are cancelled wholesale; of the forty members of one Surrey League team only five are fit to play. A village in Hampshire with a population of 400 has no less than 260 under the doctors.

Many schools have been closed down in Kent owing to the absence of teachers, and at one school only forty out of 214 pupils put in an appearance.

From Page One

Tax break will kick-start slowing economy: Centre

Mr. Pandey told *The Hindu* that in aggregate terms, this would spur the economy in a manner which "probably can't even be fathomed".

"The fact is that there was also angst, which I think the government noticed. The second is also the economic reason [slowdown]. This is a good and a new deal," he said.

"If the money comes to the government, it will be put in a certain way. If the money goes back to people, the money is distributed in a more equitable way and I will explain why. If I give the money to you, you have three choices. You can consume, as per your choice – be it on travel, dining, services, or consumer durables – which will be much more broad-based and not just be in steel and cement," he pointed out.

If people choose to save instead of consuming, that would also help, as India's savings rate needs to go up and bank deposits need to grow to support credit flows to critical segments such as micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the Finance Secretary said.

"Third, you may choose to invest directly. Have we forgotten about household investments? Millions of houses are being made or rebuilt by people on their own across small towns. They raise the money, order things on their own, get a contractor to build or rebuild their own houses. That is how it used to be and still is in many places," Mr. Pandey said.

Asked if there was an assessment of how much this tax stimulus could lift growth, the Secretary said: "What kind of multiplier will operate will depend upon the mix... It could be consumption plus investment in some cases. In either case, in the current situation that we are here, whatever you would do, it helps." Consumption will spur demand and help private investments, savings will boost bank deposits, and so on, he explained.

"So it is a relief and it is also a policy choice that the government has exercised in order to see that this extra disposable income will come back to the economy and lift the spirits. This would enhance the weakening growth engines of demand and address the slowdown concern too," the Finance Secretary said.

The Budget, he said, is "absolutely non-inflationary", with the fiscal deficit reined in at 4.4% of GDP. He dismissed suggestions that public capex has not been pushed this time, saying they "reflect inadequate understanding".

"Our effective capital expenditure is kept at ₹15.48 lakh crore, not just the ₹11.21 lakh crore to be directly spent by the Centre, as government funding will help States' capex too. On top of that, there is another ₹5 lakh crore from public sector firms, so total capex is about ₹20 lakh crore," he explained.

Trump slaps tariffs on Canada, Mexico, China

Mr. Trump's orders also suspended exemptions allowing low-value imports from the three countries to enter the U.S. duty-free. Mr. Trump invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act in imposing the tariffs.

China's Commerce Ministry said in a statement it would take "corresponding countermeasures" and file a claim against Washington at the World Trade Organisation.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum announced that her country would impose retaliatory tariffs.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau – who spoke with Ms. Sheinbaum – separately said his country would hit back with 25% levies of its own on select American goods.

'Budget's tariff tweaks will correct bad optics'

While India's peak custom duty rate is now 70%, the import duties on the top 30 items exported by the U.S. to India – led by crude petroleum, coking coal, aeroplanes, and liquefied natural gas – are minimal, in the range of zero to 7.5%, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs chairman Sanjay Kumar Agarwal said in an interview with *The Hindu*.

The rationalisation of tariff rates, bringing them down from 15 to eight slabs including the zero rate, and lowering the rates, should help "correct" the bad "optics" and send a clear signal to the world that "we are not a high-tariff country", Mr. Agarwal emphasised.

Even as Mr. Trump has notified higher tariffs on imports from Canada, China, and Mexico, Indian officials are learnt to have readied a fact-sheet laying out the country's tariffs on key U.S. products, some of which have been slashed further in the Budget. This could be presented to American counterparts through diplomatic channels.

Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey, who also leads the Department of Revenue, asserted that the government was "autonomously reviewing" India's customs duty structure to rationalise it, as announced in the last Budget.

"We have finished the peak rates of 150%, 125%, 100%, 40%, 35%, 30%, 25%. Those rate slabs are gone. It's an indication to both – our industry, as well as to the world – that we are not a high tariff nation. Our average tariff has come down to 10.6%," he said.

"India is very friendly in terms of industrial goods tariffs," Mr. Pandey pointed out.

ED attaches overseas assets worth ₹16,000 crore in high-profile cases

The Central agency has cracked down on properties in U.S., U.K., UAE, Japan, and several other foreign jurisdictions in cases involving business houses such as DHFL and prominent persons such as former IPL chief Lalit Modi, Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi, and Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

From large tracts of land and residential premises to commercial properties and bank accounts, overseas assets valued close to ₹16,000 crore across 16 foreign jurisdictions were attached or frozen in the recent past by the Enforcement Directorate in more than 30 cases. These cases involve major business houses and prominent persons, including the founder and former chairman of Indian Premier League Lalit Modi, and the uncle-nephew duo Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi.

These properties are located in the United States, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Japan, France, Spain, Switzerland, Australia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, China, Hong Kong, Mauritius, Bermuda, archipelagic Comoros, and self-governing British Crown dependency Isle of Man. "In the cases where Proceeds of Crime (PoC) are tracked down to any other country, the ED may issue attachment/freezing/confiscation orders. For the service or execution of such orders, Chapter IX of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) provides for the mechanism to seek assistance from a contracting state where the PoC had been parked," said a senior agency official, adding that a Letter Rogatory (letter of request) can be sent through courts in India to the court/authority concerned in the contracting state.

According to government records, the Sterling Biotech Limited "bank loan fraud" case tops the list with the attachment of properties worth ₹9,778 crore (₹2,538 crore of movable assets) in the U.S., U.K., and Comoros. About 250 domestic and 100 offshore shell entities in countries such as the U.S., U.K., UAE, Nigeria, Mauritius, British Virgin Islands, Panama, and Barbados, were used by the accused to divert and launder funds.

Wide network: Mehul Choksi's assets in India, which were attached by ED in 2018, in connection with the PNB fraud case. PTI

Properties valued around ₹1,246 crore were attached in Australia, the U.S., and UAE, in the Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL) case involving ₹34,615 crore. The probe is based on an FIR filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), its biggest ever "bank fraud" case, in which DHFL's then CMD Kapil Wadhawan, director Dheeraj Wadhawan and others are accused.

In the Nirav Modi case, a part of the ₹13,578-crore Punjab National Bank scam, the ED had attached properties worth over ₹915 crore (₹530.50 crore of movable assets) in the U.S., U.K., UAE, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Switzerland. He along his with uncle allegedly cheated banks through use of fraudulent Letters of Undertaking. Assets linked to Mr. Choksi were attached in the U.S., UAE, and Japan. While Mr. Nirav Modi is lodged in a U.K. jail facing extradition proceedings, Mr. Choksi has become an Antiguan citizen and is also fighting extradition request from India.

The agency, in the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. provident fund scam case, attached movable assets worth ₹578 crore in the U.K. As alleged, over ₹4,323 crore was invested in companies with questionable financial conditions, including the DHFL. Another major attachment of London and Dubai assets worth ₹503 crore was made in the Jet Airways bank loan case involving its founder chairman Naresh Goyal.

The official said a restraint order for Mauritius-based movable assets valued at ₹397.58 crore was issued in the case of Mr. Lalit Modi, against whom the Tamil Nadu Police had registered an FIR on October 13, 2010, alleging criminal conspiracy, breach of trust, cheating, forgery, etc. In the ₹3,871.71-crore REI Agro "bank credit fraud" case, about ₹231 crore in movable assets was attached in the UAE and Isle of Mann. Properties worth over ₹364 crore, including movable assets valued at ₹322 crore, were attached in Switzerland and the UAE in two Moser Baer India Limited-linked "bank loan fraud" cases.

In the City Limouzine "chit-fund fraud" case, in which ₹160 crore was attached in Switzerland and Singapore, the ED stated that prime accused Sayed Mohammed Masood and others collected over ₹1,000 crore from small-time investors in Delhi, Mumbai, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh on the promise of phenomenal returns. During the probe in the ₹3,700-crore AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal case, properties valued ₹22.17 crore and ₹7.23 crore were attached in Switzerland and France.

Cadre of banned Meitei outfit killed in 'exchange of fire' on Myanmar border

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Amid the civil war in Myanmar, there have been reports of a funeral, attended by hundreds of people, held for a member of a banned outfit based in Manipur. He was allegedly killed on the Myanmar border.

The funeral for the People's Liberation Army cadre was held at a public ground in Manipur's Imphal East. PLA is a banned Meitei insurgent outfit which espouses secession of Manipur.

When asked how armed men were allowed to hold a public funeral for the member of a banned organisation in Imphal East's Andro, a senior government official said, "There was no body. The funeral rituals took place in absentia. After the video of the ceremony started circulating, we ordered an enquiry but no action has been taken so far."

Routine check: Security personnel during a search operation in the vulnerable areas of hill and valley districts of Manipur. PTI

The PLA cadre identified as Henthoiba, 28, a resident of Kakching in Manipur, was reportedly killed on January 27 in an exchange of gunfire along the Manipur border with Myanmar.

The PLA is an armed wing of the Revolutionary People's Front, which said in a statement on January 30 that Henthoiba succumbed to injuries sustained during the encounter with "proxy enemies" in an attack planned by the Indian Army.

The valley-based insurgent groups (VBIGs) or the banned Meitei extremist groups operate from Myanmar and are often engaged in fight with the People's Defence Force (PDF) and the Kuki National Army (Burma), among the several resistance groups and Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) active in Myanmar. The EAOs are fighting against the Myanmar junta. On Saturday, intense fighting broke out between the PDF and the Junta near Tamu in Myanmar, few kilometres from Moreh border in Manipur.

BJP seeks fair probe into alleged animal sacrifice at Parasnath's Marang Buru

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In Jharkhand's Parasnath region, tensions between the Jain community and local Adivasis have escalated, particularly over worship rights at Sammed Shikharji, known as Marang Buru to residents.

The Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has accused Chief Minister Hemant Soren's government of targeting Adivasi BJP members following a goat sacrifice on July 19, which was allegedly conducted in accordance with Adivasi customs shortly after Mr. Soren's release from jail on bail related to a money-laundering case.

BJP State president Babulal Marandi has written to Mr. Hemant Soren for a fair probe into the case, saying that tensions between the Jains and Adivasis have always been present and that peace should prevail. In his letter to the Chief Minister on January 31, Mr. Marandi

Babulal Marandi

said innocent Adivasis were allegedly being framed for the animal sacrifice that was arranged and conducted by those close to the CM.

Mr. Marandi said he had received this complaint from members of the Marang Buru Sanwta Susar Baisi, a local Adivasi association, who had detailed allegations of a "political conspiracy".

"The CM's wife had publicly said that they would perform rituals as per the Adivasi tradition at the Marang Buru after he got out of jail. So, in July, both of them made a visit and performed the rituals, including allegedly sacrificing the goat. There are photos of it too," Sikander Hembrom, a member of the association and with the BJP in the State, told *The Hindu*.

Given the shared worship over the hills, Adivasis have not sacrificed any animals for many years "in the interest of keeping the peace", Mr. Hembrom said. But an FIR was registered against unknown persons over the alleged sacrifice at the Madhuban police station.

"Later, we found out that the police were trying to make me and four other Adivasi leaders of the BJP accused in the case," Mr. Hembrom said, adding that the Chief Minister should "own up" to having performed traditional Adivasi rituals at Marang Buru.

Mr. Marandi said there were allegations of the police trying to allegedly shield the people involved in the sacrifice because of their links to Mr. Soren.

Prestige battle between BJP, SP livens up sleepy Milkipur

Mayank Kumar
MILKIPUR

Ravi Pasi, a Samajwadi Party (SP) worker from Mau, is focused on at least six daily *nukkad* (street-corner) meetings in Ayodhya district's Milkipur constituency, where a bypoll is scheduled for February 5.

"This is a prestige battle. I have attended over 40 such meetings, along with door-to-door campaigns, in the past seven days. If we win big, the Bharatiya Janata Party's game for 2027 is over," he said anticipating success.

Mr. Pasi is among hundreds of SP workers campaigning for this high-stakes bypoll, which became necessary after sitting SP MLA Awadhesh Prasad pulled off a surprise victory from Faizabad in the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

The Faizabad constituency includes Ayodhya district, home to the newly built Ram Temple. Mr. Prasad's son Ajeet Prasad is now the SP candidate for the seat, while the BJP has given ticket to Chandrabhan Paswan, a party worker. Both are from the Pasi caste.

Milkipur, a constituency reserved for Scheduled Caste candidates, has been a tough electoral landscape for the BJP, where it has only won once in the past 33 years.

During the campaign, the constituency has seen an influx of large numbers of leaders and workers from both major political formations in the State, the SP and the BJP. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has visited the seat five times over the past month.

The campaign has seen competing narratives: the SP's Pichhda, Dalits and Alpsankhyak (PDA) pitch (which stands for Backward Classes, Dalits, and minorities) against the Hindutva cry of the BJP. "The BJP is fluttering like a burnt cartridge. You all are my family, be aware of the BJP, they are doing everything possible to steal your rights," the Faizabad MP said at a meeting in Baswar Buzurg village.

Intense drive: Samajwadi Party leader Dimple Yadav during a rally ahead of the upcoming byelections in Milkipur. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The SP's leaders and workers are highlighting alleged discrimination against the backward classes, Dalits, and minorities in the administration, with various charts. "PDA is united behind us (the SP). The atrocities, crime and negligence happening with this marginalised section is the core issue in Milkipur. Voters are chanting that the Ayodhya Lok Sabha result was only a glimpse, the real picture is Milkipur," said Praveen Kumar Saroj, an SP worker from Jaunpur, who has been stationed in the constituency for over two weeks.

The SP's strategy is door-to-door outreach along with Nukkad Sabhas. The party is also crying foul, alleging that the State administration is helping the ruling party.

For the residents of Milkipur, a dusty town located 30-odd km from Ayodhya, this frenetic activity is new. "We haven't seen such a movement of convoys in previous elections. Ministers, MLAs and MLCs are sitting in tea shops seeking support, but voters are completely silent. They are assuring both groups, but knowing everyone makes promises only," said Sailendra, a resident of Baswar Buzurg village.

Milkipur's voters are busy struggling with their own local issues and facing rural distress.

"I don't have time to think about election, my son is working at a factory in Ghaziabad and suffering from typhoid," said Pushkar Singh, another farmer from Baswar Buzurg village.

The BJP campaign in Milkipur is focused on the numerically dominant SC community, projecting the SP as an 'anti-Dalit' party. In their speeches and door-to-door outreach, party leaders have been claiming that the SP has always insulted Dalit icon Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and given support to the criminal elements who commit atrocities against Dalits. On at least three occasions in the Milkipur campaign, Mr. Adityanath has referred to Moeed Khan, an SP worker who was booked for raping a Dalit girl.

"We will get huge support from SCs, OBCs and all other sections of the society. People are unhappy with the SP because there has been no development under Opposition leaders," said Kunal Pandey, a BJP leader worker.

Modi attacks AAP, lauds 'people's Budget' in final poll rally in capital

Prime Minister says the BJP government has been investing funds in building roads, schools, hospitals, and infrastructure; he criticises the AAP and Congress, urging voters to support the BJP for ushering in an era of development in Delhi

Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

Lauding the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that only the BJP respected the middle class of the country and the Budget was focused on ensuring that "Modi's guarantees" were fulfilled.

Addressing his final rally in the capital at R.K. Puram ahead of the Delhi Assembly election in support of BJP candidates, he said, "For building Viksit Bharat, I gave a 'guarantee' to strengthen the country's four pillars. These pillars are the youth, poor, farmers, and women. The Budget presented yesterday [Saturday] ensures that the guarantees of Modi are fulfilled. Over the past years, we delivered free ration, free health treatment, and *pucca* houses to the poor," Mr. Modi said, adding that Ms. Sitharaman had presented a "Budget for the people".

Final sprint: Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves to the gathering at R.K. Puram in New Delhi on Sunday during a public meeting ahead of the Delhi Assembly election. ANI

The BJP government was investing money in building roads, schools, hospitals, and infrastructure, he added.

Taking on the Aam Aadmi Party, Mr. Modi asked voters to remove the party from government and bring in an era of development, as many States had seen under BJP governments. "Will you remove *AAPda*?[disaster]," he asked the crowd. "*AAPda* of Delhi wasted 11 years, so my request is to give us a chance to serve you. I guarantee that I will spend all my efforts to remove every problem and difficulty."

A "double-engine government" must be formed in Delhi to channel energy into beautifying and decorating Delhi, instead of "fighting and making excuses". Even by mistake, the AAP government should not return to power, which would lead to five more wasted years, he warned.

Stepping up the attack on AAP, Mr. Modi said "the AAP's *jhaadu* [broom, the AAP's party symbol] was being scattered everywhere". "The AAP leaders are leaving the party as they can see the anger against it on the ground," he said, speaking about the eight AAP MLAs joining the BJP days ahead of the election. The MLAs had not received ticket from the AAP for the election.

Taking on the Congress, Mr. Modi said under the Congress governments, the middle class would lose their sleep for nights before and after the Budget, but the BJP had presented a Budget that provided relief to the middle class.

He said: "Let me paint a picture for you. Under the Nehru government, if you were earning ₹12 lakh, approximately one-fourth of your salary would have gone to the government. Under the Indira Gandhi government, you would have had to part with over ₹2 lakh in taxes. But now, under the BJP government, someone earning ₹12 lakh per annum will not have to give any money to the government. Congress governments only levied taxes to fill their own coffers. But BJP looks at relief for the people."

He also reassured people that when the BJP comes to power in Delhi, no schemes would be rolled back and no homes would be demolished.

We heard the voice of the middle class, says Nirmala Sitharaman on tax relief

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman says the tax break will leave more money in the hands of the people and boost consumption. PTI

Paraphrasing former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday described the Union Budget as "by the people, for the people, of the people", and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was fully behind the idea to cut taxes for the middle class, but it took time to convince the bureaucrats.

"We have heard the voice of the middle class" who had been complaining about their aspirations not being met despite being honest taxpayers, she said.

With the taxpayers wanting the government to do more to limit the impact of factors such as inflation, the Prime Minister was quick to task Ms. Sitharaman with looking at ways to give relief.

While Mr. Modi was quick to agree to tax relief, it took a bit of convincing to get on board the officials in the Finance Ministry and the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) – who are tasked with ensuring revenue collection to meet welfare and other schemes, she said. "They were not wrong in reminding me periodically saying what would it mean? But ultimately, everybody came around," she said.

Presenting her eighth Budget, Ms. Sitharaman on Saturday announced an increase in the personal income tax threshold below which taxpayers owe no tax to ₹12 lakh, up from ₹7 lakh, as well as a rejig in tax brackets that would help those earning higher incomes save up to ₹1.1 lakh. The ₹5 lakh hike in exemption limit is the biggest ever and equals all the reliefs that were given between 2005 and 2023.

"I think the Prime Minister put it succinctly; he said it's the people's Budget, it is the Budget which the people wanted."

Ms. Sitharaman said the new rates would "substantially reduce the taxes of the middle class and leave more money in their hands, boosting household consumption, savings, and investment".

She said the tax cuts had been in the works for some time. One of the ideas was to make the direct tax simpler and easier to comply with. Work on this started in the July 2024 Budget and a new law is on the anvil to simplify the language, reduce the compliance burden, and be more user-friendly.

Forum flags fall in employment days under MGNREGS

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Falling short of the 100 days of work guaranteed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), average workdays per household under the scheme had come down to just 44.62 days in 2024-25 from 52.08 days in 2023-24, a consortium of non-profit organisations said on Sunday.

The number of person days fell from 312.37 crore in the financial year 2023-24 to 239.67 crore in 2024-25. The term "person days" refers to the total number of workdays by a person registered under the MGNREGS in a financial year.

In a statement on Sunday, the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, a consortium of MGNREGS workers and NGOs working in the social sector, said that low budgetary allocation which remained stagnant at ₹86,000 crore, the same as that of last year, reflected the government's deliberate neglect of the rural workforce.

As of February 1, the deficit stood at ₹9,860 crore with pending wages of ₹6,948.55 crore as of January 25.

Steep fall: The number of person days fell from 312.37 crore to 239.67 crore.

With two months remaining in the financial year, this recurring trend, where an average of 20% of the Budget is used to clear past dues, means that the effective allocation for 2025-26 will be no more than ₹70,000 crore.

This, when adjusted against inflation, is approximately ₹4,000 crore less than the previous year's, it pointed out. "As a percentage of GDP, the allocation has further declined to a mere 0.24%, compared to 0.26% in the previous financial year. The scheme is awaiting routine wage indexation, and even this adjustment has not been accounted for," the statement said.

The NREGA Morcha said an inadequate Budget will result in "massive delays in wage payments exacerbating", "financial distress for rural workers", "suppression of work demand" and "denying people their right to employment", "decline in quality asset creation", and "weakening of rural infrastructure".

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that the government's neglect of this "crucial safety net" exposes its "indifference to rural livelihoods". It reduces MGNREGS's reach, leaving drought-hit and poor rural workers stranded, he said.

"It precludes any increase in the wages paid to workers. Even in this ongoing financial year, the minimum average notified wage rate was increased by only 7%. This is at a time when Consumer Price Index inflation is estimated to be ~5%. MGNREGA is therefore ground zero for the national crisis of wage stagnation," Mr. Ramesh added.

'India reviewing its stance on crypto due to global changes'

Reuters

India is reviewing its stance on cryptocurrencies due to shifting attitudes towards the virtual asset in other countries, a senior government official said on Sunday. The review could further delay the publication of a discussion paper on cryptocurrencies that was due for release in September 2024.

"More than one or two jurisdictions have changed their stance towards cryptocurrency in terms of the usage, their acceptance, where do they see the importance of crypto assets. In that stride, we are having a look at the discussion paper once again," India's Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said.

He said that because such assets "don't believe in borders", India's stance cannot be unilateral.

'Budget focus firmly on employment generation'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Labour Ministry got its highest-ever allocation in this year's Union Budget, and the increase in funding will help focus on the new employment generation scheme, Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Sunday. The "record ₹32,646 crore" allocation is almost 80% higher than last year's Revised Estimates, he added.

The Ministry's main focus is the new Employment Generation Scheme, for which the budgetary allocation has been doubled to ₹20,000 crore. "The allocation under the Employees' Pension Scheme has been increased by ₹300 crore and under the PM Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana by 37% compared to last year," he said.

Commenting on the social security benefits for gig workers, he said that the gig workforce is a vital pillar of India's new-age economy. "The government's decision to provide them with identity cards, e-Shram registration, and healthcare security under the PM Jan Arogya Yojana is a transformative step towards their social security and well-being. This will empower nearly one crore gig workers," he said.

Cong. forms panel to monitor 'conduct of free and fair polls'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday constituted an eight-member committee – Empowered Action Group of Leaders and Experts (EAGLE) – to monitor the conduct of free and fair elections by the Election Commission (EC).

The move comes more than two months after the Maharashtra Assembly election results, when the party, pointing out the vast difference in the voting pattern between the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, had raised a red flag on possible electoral fraud.

The committee will first take up the Maharashtra "voters' list manipulation" issue, and submit a detailed report to the leadership at the earliest, the party said in a statement.

The panel includes Congress treasurer Ajay Maken and senior leaders Digvijaya Singh, Abhishek Singhvi, Praveen Chakravarty, and Pawan Khera. Gurdeep Singh Sappal, Nitin Raut, and Challa Vamshi Chand Reddy are part of the panel.

Besides Maharashtra, EAGLE will analyse past elections in other States, and "proactively monitor upcoming elections" and all other issues related to the conduct of "free and fair elections in the country", a press note signed by the party's General Secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal said. It will also closely monitor the upcoming Delhi Assembly election, scheduled for February 5.

The committee will first take up the Maharashtra 'voter list manipulation' issue.

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, while addressing Congress leaders at the inauguration of the new party headquarters on January 15, had alleged there has been an increase of nearly one crore voters between Maharashtra Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, but the EC is neither answering the queries raised nor giving the lists of voters.

He further alleged there is a "serious problem" with the country's election system and urged the EC to ensure there is transparency in elections.

AAP launches 'Amit Shah *ki gundagardi*' campaign

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) attacked people who did not vote for it, and called the alleged act "Amit Shah *ki gundagardi* [hooliganism]". He urged Delhiites to rise against such alleged attacks.

"To give voice to Delhi's outrage, we are launching a hashtag today: #AmitShahKiGundagardi. I urge the people of Delhi – if you or someone you know has been subjected to violence, threats, abuse, or intimidation, to use this hashtag and report the incident on Twitter. Even if you haven't personally experienced it but are aware of such an event, post about it under this hashtag," he said.

On Sunday, he wrote to the Election Commission (EC) to appoint independent observers in his New Delhi Assembly constituency, alleging an attack on his party workers ahead of the polls.

"Special election observers should be deployed to monitor police activity on the night before polling day and prevent any unlawful detentions, especially in the sensitive areas," he said in the letter.

INDIAN OIL CORPORATION LIMITED
(Marketing Division)

Advertisement No. IOCL/MKTG/HO/REC/2025

All India Open Recruitment of Experienced Personnel in Non-Executive category & Special Recruitment Drive [SRD] for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities [PwBD] in Non-Executive category

Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) is an integrated and diversified energy major with presence in Oil, Gas, Petrochemicals and Alternative Energy sources. Empowered with the 'Maharatna' status, the organization renders overriding prominence to the energy needs of the country and has vision of being 'The Energy of India' and 'A Globally Admired Company'.

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Detailed advertisement alongwith Number of Posts including reservation, educational qualification, experience criteria, mode of selection, and other criteria/ parameters are available on our Corporation website www.iocl.com. To refer to the detailed advertisement and to apply online, visit website www.iocl.com, then go to 'IndianOil For You' > click on 'IndianOil For Careers' > 'Latest Job Opening' > 'Job Opening' > 'Recruitment of Non-Executive Personnel in Marketing Division-2025'.

Summary of Post-wise positions notified is as under:

A) For All India Open Recruitment of Experienced Personnel in Non-Executive category:

Post Code	Grade	Name of Post*	Total no. of Positions
101 to 123	Gd-I	Junior Operator	**215**

* Refer to detailed advertisement for positions reserved for SC/ST/OBC(NCL)/EWS/ExSM which is as per Govt. Directives, and other instructions.

B) Special Recruitment Drive [SRD] only for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities [PwBD] in Non-Executive category:

SRD - Posts Reserved only for PwBD			
Post Code	**Grade**	**Name of Post**	**Total no. of Positions**
201 to 204	Gd-I	Junior Attendant	**23**
205 to 208	Gd-III	Junior Business Assistant	**08**

Important Dates to remember

Activity	Dates
Date of Opening of Online Application (website link: https://iocl.com/latest-job-opening)	03.02.2025 (10.00 Hrs)
Last date of submission of Online Application, Document Upload and Payment of Application Fees	23.02.2025 (23.55 Hrs)
Tentative Month of Computer Based Test (CBT)*	April, 2025
Likely schedule for Publication of Computer Based Test Results (Shortlist for SPPT/CPT) on https://iocl.com/latest-job-opening	April/ May 2025

INBRIEF

Five killed, 35 injured as bus falls into gorge in Gujarat

Five people were killed and 35 injured when a private bus carrying pilgrims from Madhya Pradesh fell into a deep gorge in Dang district of Gujarat early on Sunday morning, the police said. Seventeen of the injured were grievously hurt, they said, adding that the victims were on a trip to religious places across the country. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced an assistance of ₹4 lakh to the families of the deceased, ₹1 lakh to critically injured victims and ₹50,000 to the others hurt. The accident occurred when the bus driver lost control over the wheels near Saputara, said Superintendent of Police in-charge S.G. Patil.

Controversy over Saraswati Puja in Kolkata College

The controversy over organising Saraswati Puja at Jogesh Chandra Law College in Kolkata took a different turn on Sunday as West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu faced protests by a group of students. "I am here to talk to you. None will coerce you, terrorise you or threaten you. If anyone has issued any threat, we will take strong action against him," the Education Minister said. Following the controversy between two groups of students on college premises over organising the Puja, the Calcutta High Court on Friday asked the Kolkata Police to ensure that the ceremony can be held by law college students with adequate security.

Three workers die while cleaning drain in Kolkata

Three workers died on Sunday morning while cleaning a clogged drain in the Bantala area of the Kolkata Leather Complex. The deceased workers were identified at Farzem Sheikh, Hashi Sheikh, and Suman Sardar, all residents of Murshidabad district in West Bengal. According to reports, the cleaning work by workers began at 9 a.m. A pipe broke down, causing the workers to fall 10 feet into the manhole. Their bodies were recovered by a team of police, Fire Services personnel, and State disaster relief forces around 1.30 p.m. Local people said the workers had been engaged by the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Agency.

R.G. Kar MBBS student found dead in her room

A second-year MBBS student at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata was found dead on Friday in her room at the Kamarhati ESI Hospital quarters. The police have registered a case of unnatural death, officials said on Sunday. According to reports, the deceased student, Ivy Prasad, was not responding to calls following which her mother broke open the room. Her mother is a doctor at the Kamarhati ESI Hospital and her father works in a nationalised bank. There is apprehension that the student could have died by suicide. (Suicide prevention helpline numbers in Kolkata: 033-24637401, 033-24637432)

Navigation satellite launched last week suffers malfunction

ISRO fails to carry out orbit-raising operation, says alternative strategies for utilising NVS-02 for navigation in an elliptical orbit being worked out

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Landmark launch: The NVS-02, the second satellite in the NVS series, was launched by the ISRO from Sriharikota on Wednesday.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has been unable to perform the intended orbit-raising operations for the NVS-02 satellite due to a valve malfunction. The NVS-02, the second satellite in the NVS series, was launched by the ISRO on January 29 as part of its landmark 100th launch from Sriharikota.

The space agency on Sunday said that the orbit-raising operations towards positioning the satellite to the designated orbital slot could not be carried out as the valves for admitting the oxidiser to fire the thrusters for orbit-raising did not open.

The ISRO was supposed to carry out the orbit-raising operations after the launch, but has been unable to perform the manoeuvres due to the glitch. The operations were to be executed by the Master Control Facility at Hassan in Karnataka.

"The satellite systems are healthy and the satellite is currently in elliptical orbit. Alternate mission strategies for utilising the satellite for navigation in an elliptical orbit is being worked out," the ISRO said in a statement.

The space agency said the NVS-02 navigation satellite was successfully injected into the intended Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit. "All the launch vehicle stages performed flawlessly and the orbit was achieved with a high degree of precision. Subsequent to the launch, the solar panels on board the satellite were successfully deployed and power generation is nominal. Communication with the ground station has been established," the space agency said on Sunday.

NVS-02 is configured with navigation payload in L1, L5 and S bands, in addition to ranging payload in C-band, like its predecessor, NVS-01. "It will be placed at 111.75°E, replacing IRNSS-1E. NVS-02 uses a combination of indigenous and procured atomic clocks for precise time estimation," the ISRO said before the launch.

After Manipur, Assam destroys poppy plantations

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

After Manipur, Assam has begun destroying poppy plantations. On Sunday, the police in Goalpara district of western Assam used tractors to destroy poppy plants on more than 56 acres of a sandbar in the Brahmaputra. The destroyed crop of the opium-producing plant was worth ₹27.2 crore.

People living on some sandbars or *chars*, which are usually difficult to reach, have been known to grow cannabis. Officials said this was one of the first instances that poppy cultivation was reported from sandbars.

Taking to social media platform X, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma equated the local poppy cultivators with Pablo Escobar, a Colombian drug lord who was killed in 1993. "Dear Local Pablo Escobars, sorry to spoil your planned Udta Assam party! Because @Goalpara_Police destroyed 170 Bighas of poppy cultivation in the Char (sandbar) areas worth ₹27.20 crore in January. So next time you think of drugs, think of @assampolice first," he wrote. Manipur Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh was quick to respond to the post.

Poppy plantations being destroyed in Assam.
X/@HIMANTABISWA

"My deep appreciation for the decisive measures taken in Assam, under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri @himantabiswa *ji*, in addressing the challenges posed by the cultivation of poppy," he wrote. "We stand together and remain resolute in our shared goal of building a future where every northeast youth is protected, nurtured, and allowed to thrive free from the shadow of drugs," Mr. Singh added.

The anti-drug drive that entailed burning acres of cannabis and poppy plantations was said to be one of the factors behind the ethnic conflict between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities since May 2023.

Indians in Congo asked to depart to safer places

Press Trust of India
JOHANNESBURG

The Embassy of India in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, on Sunday said it is closely monitoring the security situation in the central African country and asked all the Indian nationals in Bukavu "to immediately depart to safer locations".

The Embassy issued three advisories during the day and recommended that everyone prepare an emergency plan. There are about 1,000 Indian nationals in Congo. Rwanda-backed M23 rebels captured the city of Goma and are looking at expanding their area of control.

"There are reports of M23 being only around 20-25 km away from Bukavu. Given the security situation, we once again advise all Indian nationals residing in Bukavu to immediately depart to safer locations by whatever means available while the airports, borders and commercial routes are still open," the advisory said.

The latest advisory has also given a number (+243 890024313) and a mail ID (cons.kinshasas@mea.gov.in) for Indian nationals to contact in the case of emergency.

India cannot allow millions of illegal migrants, says Vice-President Dhankhar

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

> We cannot allow our electoral politics to be disturbed by demographic dislocations and earthquakes
>
> **JAGDEEP DHANKHAR**
> Vice-President

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Sunday that the country cannot permit the entry of millions of illegal migrants and allow electoral politics to be disturbed by demographic dislocation. He appealed to youth to neutralise anti-national narratives.

Mr. Dhankhar, also the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, voiced concern over frequent disruptions in Parliament.

Speaking at the World Forum of Accountants (WOFA) conference in the national capital, he said youth should be concerned about existential challenges.

"Our nation cannot afford to have millions of illegal migrants... We cannot allow our electoral politics to be disturbed by demographic dislocations and earthquakes. These are things that will matter to you because these are the challenges for which you will have to collectively finally answer," he said.

Without elaborating further, Mr. Dhankhar said, "I have no doubt... It is said that for informed people, a gesture is enough."

Expressing concern that some people and entities are upset by the country's development journey, he also said there is a trend to generate sensation and narratives. "In the narratives, nation, nationalism, and national interest are forgotten," he said.

Appealing to the youth, he said that the power to "neutralise anti-national narratives and defeat forces inimical to India" is in their hands. He stressed that there is a need to imbibe the spirit of economic nationalism, as this would benefit the economy.

CJI, SC judges hear out issues of district judiciary, discuss case pendency, recruitment

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna has met and interacted with judges and officials of High Courts and judicial officers and staffers from district courts across the country to discuss the challenges facing the judiciary, especially pendency of cases.

Supreme Court judges and senior officials from the Ministries of Home Affairs and Law and Justice participated in the national conference held on Saturday to address the issues faced by the judiciary in the States. An apex court statement said the conference "gave an invaluable opportunity to all stakeholders within the judiciary to come together and engage in a meaningful dialogue".

The discussions were held in the same week a Bench led by the CJI relaxed the conditions for appointment of ad hoc judges in High Courts as a measure to combat backlog of cases, especially in the criminal appeals' jurisdiction.

Justice Khanna and Justices A.S. Oka, B.V. Nagarathna and Dipankar Datta discussed various topics, including ways to narrow the gulf between institution and disposal of cases, identification of case types flooding the judicial dockets and bottlenecks in case disposal and strategies to reduce backlog of cases at different levels.

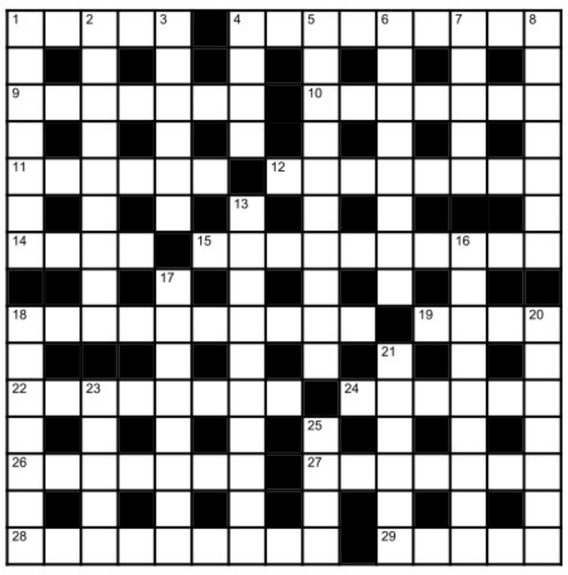
Another session at the conference explored measures for timely recruitment of judicial officers and court staff in district courts. They discussed steps, including a continual recruitment/empanelment of public prosecutors, legal aid counsel, creation of permanent IT and data cadre in the High Courts and district courts. On top of the list of topics for discussions was the need for an objective and transparent transfer policy for judicial officers and measures to enhance objectivity in the process of recommending suitable candidates from the district judiciary for elevation to High Courts.

TH CROSSWORD + 14398

(set by Gussalufz)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Grant from a Dutch university (5)
4 Pompous, abrupt old city staff (9)
9 Common cold heralded by nasty green drips essentially (7)
10 Launch platform, say, packaging trendy wife (7)
11 The Spanish swimmer is playful (6)
12 Never ceasing to rip my art and craft? (8)
14 Good man, embracing wife, rejected fling (4)
15 Justice, etc., maybe from savage carrot-and-stick gal not lacking in drama? (5,5)
18 Caught cook to request aloo tikkis? (10)
19 "Release me!" snapped the thing (4)
22 Wreck lingerie, snagging one too small in size (8)
24 Younger journalist overexerting, last to leave after work (6)
26 Sob! Bamboo may be periodically chopped around trees (7)
27 Potential double blows after wicket (5-2)
28 Extremely spiteful punk in destruction-mode inherently (9)
29 Feel sorry for beheaded bird (5)

Down

1 Swell golden dress a royal discarded (7)
2 Declaration from fellow: "I party, love" (9)
3 So, after drinking a bit of rum with a joint, drive? (6)
4 Left out of dark side? (4)
5 Grew quiet and dwelled after a letter from Greece (10)
6 Unreasonable G.M. fired from board opening vacancy in Munich (1,3,4)
7 Building a railway engine, perhaps (5)
8 Oddly, curry helpings without guidance create "outbursts" (7)
13 Hang on, want ideas treated on virtue, ultimately (4,3,3)
16 Sleep well beyond one, tucked in and getting rest (9)
17 Surpass in training? Not until we can run regularly (8)
18 A beast of a vehicle I purchased, 50% off! (7)
20 Cycling coach gets tense with anxiety (7)
21 Tense medical procedure strongly putting out chief of surgery (6)
23 Grandfather possibly shut up after a sip of codeine (5)
25 Secretly start without bothersome person (4)

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

No.SS6419 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to previous puzzle

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			S	E	C	O	N	D	N	A	T	U	R	E
	A		H		A		E		Y				E	
E	P	E	E				S	U	M	T	O	T	A	L
	P		E		P		W		S		P		C	
P	A	S	T	R	A	M	I				E	S	T	H
	R					D		L		I		R		S
N	E	W	C	A	L	E	D	O	N	I	A			
	N		U		O		O		S		T		M	
S	T	E	R	I	C			A	T	Y	P	I	C	A
	L		I		K		T		N		O		A	
S	Y	N	A	P	S	E	S		C	I	N	E	M	A

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

5	9	6	3	2	4	8	7	1
8	4	3	7	1	5	2	9	6
7	2	1	6	8	9	5	3	4
2	3	7	4	6	8	1	5	9
6	1	8	9	5	3	7	4	2
9	5	4	1	7	2	3	6	8
1	7	9	2	3	6	4	8	5
3	6	5	8	4	1	9	2	7
4	8	2	5	9	7	6	1	3

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FAITH

Mutual enrichment

Vaishnava Acharya Nanjeeyar wrote a *taniyan* (special sloka) in praise of Parasara Bhattar. Nanjeeyar's special sloka says Bhattar is the son of Kooratazhvan. Obviously, this itself is reason enough for honouring Bhattar. Parasara Bhattar was blessed to serve the Lord. He was the learned purohita of Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam. Nanjeeyar prays for Parasara Bhattar's blessings.

It was Ramanujacharya who gave Bhattar the name Parasara. This was to fulfil one of Alavandar's wishes. Alavandar had wanted the son of an adherent of Visishtadvaita to be named after sage Parasara, the author of Vishnu Purana. Parasara Bhattar studied sacred texts under Embar, disciple of Ramanujacharya. Bhattar was very dear to Lord Ranganatha and Ranganayaki of Srirangam, said T.A.K. Srinivasacharya in a discourse.

Bhattar wrote Sri Rangaraja Stava in praise of Lord Ranganatha, and Sri Guna Ratna Kosa in praise of Ranganayaki Thayar. The Lord is Supreme because of His association with the Goddess. She is enriched by Him, and He by Her. She is the Goddess of wealth, for She is Mahalakshmi incarnate. But He is Her wealth, just as She is His. Thirumangai Azhvar describes Lord Narayana thus: *thiruvukkum thiruvaagiya selva* (the One who is the wealth of the Goddess of wealth). Nammazhvar says in his Thiruvaimozhi: *agalagillen iraiyum endru alarmelmangai urai maarba; nigaril pugazhaai*... Alarmelmanga will never be separated from His chest even for a moment. The next line says *nigaril pugazhai* – One with unequalled fame. It becomes clear that the incomparable and unequalled fame of the Lord is due to His connection with Goddess Mahalakshmi.

INBRIEF

RBI's rate stance, Q3 results to drive markets this week

RBI's interest rate decision, quarterly earnings and global cues would be the major driving factors for equity markets this week, analysts said adding that the impact of the Union Budget could linger on this week. "U.S. and India's manufacturing PMI for January to be released on Monday, will be the key macro data to watch out for," said Siddhartha Khemka, head of research, wealth management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. PTI

Exporters seek extension of interest equalisation scheme

The Indian exporting community on Sunday urged Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to extend the interest equalisation scheme (IES) for getting affordable rates of credit, as their demand was not mentioned in the Budget. The scheme, according to exporters, has helped them avail of rupee export credit at competitive rates at a time when the global economy is facing headwinds. In September last year, the government extended the scheme till December 31, 2024. PTI

WeWork's India franchisee files for IPO in Mumbai

The Indian franchisee of U.S. shared office space manager WeWork has filed for an initial public offering in Mumbai, draft papers filed by the company on Saturday showed. The offer will consist of the sale of 33 million equity shares by Indian real estate firm Embassy Group and 10.3 million equity shares by 1 Ariel Way Tenant. It will not issue new shares. "The company will not receive any proceeds from the offer for sale," WeWork India Management said. REUTERS

January records a subdued power consumption growth of just 3%

Muted demand as well as consumption said to be on account of decrease in use of heating appliances like heaters and geysers with day and night temperatures remaining above normal levels; trend to continue in February as well

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India's power consumption increased by just 2.7% to 137.49 billion units (BU) in January as use of heating appliances like heater and geysers reduced last month, owing to above-normal temperatures.

According to India Metrological Department (IMD) the country's mean temperature in January was 18.98 degrees Celsius, the third highest for the month since 1901, behind 1958 and 1990.

Hotter days ahead: Peak power demand is expected to touch 270 GW in the summer of 2025, as per government estimates. FILE PHOTO

According to official data, power consumption was 133.94 BU in January 2024.

Similarly, the highest supply in a day (peak power demand met) also rose to 237.30 GW from 222.32 GW in January 2024.

The peak power demand touched an all-time high of about 250 GW in May 2024. The previous all-time high peak power demand of 243.27 GW was recorded in September 2023. Earlier last year, the power ministry projected a peak power demand of 235 GW during the day and 225 GW during evening hours for May 2024 while 240 GW during daytime and 235 GW in the evening hours for June 2024.

The ministry had also estimated that peak power demand may hit 260 GW in the summer of 2024.

According to government estimates, peak power demand is expected to touch 270 GW in the summer of 2025.

Experts opine that power demand as well as consumption remained subdued last month mainly due to decrease in use of heating appliances like heaters and geysers amid day and night temperatures remaining above normal levels.

They further said that the growth of power demand as well as consumption will be subdued in February also due to rise in mercury levels.

UDAN expansion plan to spur tarmac coaches' demand

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

The Union Budget plan to add 120 new destinations across India under the UDAN (*Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik*) scheme for regional connectivity is expected to drive demand for electric airport tarmac coaches, industry honchos said.

JBM Auto, holding more than 90% of the market share in this segment, is likely to benefit, said a top company official.

"JBM Auto is leader in tarmac buses and with the announcement of 120 new destinations under the

UDAN scheme, the company is set to benefit," said Nishant Arya, vice-chairman & MD, JBM Auto,

Tarmac coaches made by the company already operate in more than 12 major airports, including Delhi and Mumbai.

"We have the world's largest electric bus manufacturing facility outside China, with a capacity of 20,000 buses annually," Mr. Arya added.

Order book

The company has an order book for more than 10,000 electric buses.

The move to prioritise clean technologies and offering duty exemptions on EV battery production will enhance India's battery manufacturing capacity, lower production costs, and encourage technological advancement, according to Mr. Arya.

NMDC's iron ore output up 12% in Jan.

N. RaviKumar
HYDERABAD

NMDC's iron ore production in January increased more than 12% to 5.10 million tonne (mt) compared with 4.54 mt a year earlier while sales declined under 2% to 4.48 mt (4.56 mt).

For the 10 months ended January, production of the key raw material for steel stood at 35.87 mt (36.32 mt) and sales at 36.22 mt (36.49 mt), the company said.

The production and dispatch were the highest ever for January since inception and reflect the right momentum to achieve the targets for FY25, CMD (additional charge) Amitava Mukherjee said. NMDC had clocked a record 45.1 mt production last fiscal.

On Union Budget, he said it was growth-oriented and set the stage for NMDC to achieve its Vision 2030 of 100 mt production.

The company is also exploring critical minerals like lithium and cobalt to fuel the renewable energy sector and green transition in the country. NMDC had recently announced contours of an ambitious ₹70,000-crore five-year capital expenditure plan.

Sugar production expected to decline: ISMA

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

The Indian Sugar and Bio Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) has estimated sugar production for the 2024-2025 sugar season (October 2024 to September 2025) to be almost 9% lower than that of the previous season.

A press release from the ISMA said gross production was expected to be 310.2 lakh tonne against 341.1 lakh tonne in the 2023-2024 season. About 37.5 lakh tonne would be diverted for ethanol. Net production would be 272.69 lakh tonne and 10 lakh tonne exported.

Almost 165 lakh tonne was produced between October 1, 2024 and January 31, 2025 by 500 factories compared with 187.15 lakh tonne produced last sugar season by 520 factories.

As per the data with the government, domestic sugar consumption in the first three months of the 2024-25 sugar season (October to December 2024) was about 65 lakh tonne, almost five lakh tonne lower than the cumulative sales quota of 69.5 lakh tonne for the corresponding period a year ago.

ISMA said sugarcane yield and sugar recovery in Uttar Pradesh was lower than last year mainly because of widespread red rot infestation and varietal replacement resulting in lower estimated sugar production in the State. Similarly, Maharashtra and Karnataka had lower cane yields per unit area.

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories faces ₹184 crore penalty over 'unpaid GST on excess refund settlement'

N. Ravikumar
HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories has received an order directing the company to pay more than ₹184 crore penalty under the CGST Act 2017. The authority has passed the order on the contention that the company has received excess refund and not paid Goods and Services Tax (GST) on settlement amount, the drugmaker said in a filing on the order received from the Additional Commissioner of Central Tax, Ranga Reddy GST Commissionerate, Hyderabad. The January 28 order, which the company said it received on February 1, levies a penalty of ₹1,84,35,58,762. "Based on our evaluation, there is no material impact on the financials, operations or other activities of the company," Dr. Reddy's said.

It will evaluate filing necessary appeal with the appellate authority, it said without sharing details of the settlement amount.

A pragmatic Budget

D. Lakshminarayanan

The Finance Minister has had a laser sharp focus on the middle class. Right at the end of her speech came the biggest applause with her announcement of the income tax slab rationalisation. The revised tax structure will lead to an enhanced disposal income in the hands of the middle class. The increased affordability will contribute to a boost in consumption.

Specific to the real estate sector, increasing exemption for two houses as self-occupied is another step in her vision to reduce the tax impact and increase affordability. This is a big boost to the housing sector and is likely to act as a fillip for further investments in the sector.

Affordable housing

Following the success of SWAMIH-1 (Special Window for Affordable and Mid Income Housing) fund, the Government has announced SWAMIH-2 fund of ₹15,000 crore. This is aimed at a fast completion of one lakh affordable housing units and will certainly help the stalled projects towards closure and help the buyers as well. This is a boost to the affordable housing sector and is in line with the 'Housing for All' vision of the central government. One of our expectations was for the government to have a relook at the definition of 'affordable housing' based on geography. While that has not been announced by the FM in her budget speech and may have come as a disappointment to those in the affordable housing space, we are hopeful that the FM will consider this measure and make a separate announcement in the near future as it only requires a notification.

The raising of the TDS threshold on rent beyond ₹2.4 lakh is expected to reduce the tax and compliance burden for landlords and tenants while at the same time simplifying rental transactions. This is yet another positive for the real estate sector.

The slew of measures for the MSMEs including increasing the investment limit will serve as a great boost to the sector and lead to further growth of Tier 2 and 3 towns in the country. We expect the 'turbo charging' of MSMEs to create new demand for housing in smaller towns driven by the expansion of small businesses and entrepreneurs in remote locations. In addition to focusing on and providing impetus to the development of Tier 3 and 4 towns in the country, the FM has also been mindful of the growing needs of the larger cities. The setting up of "The Urban Challenge Fund" is a welcome move and will help reshape cities into growth pockets with a coordinated plan from both Centre and States.

This will make cities more liveable, attract investments, create jobs and fuel economic growth. This infra push will result in increased demand for housing in the metros and larger cities.

After all the tax rationalisation measures, the overall borrowing programme for the year is forecast to be at the same level as last year and the fiscal deficit is still projected at sub 5% and that makes this budget even more remarkable.

Overall, I think it is quite a pragmatic budget, that will lead to increased housing demand for sure.

(The writer is the managing director of Sundaram Home Finance Ltd.)

Budget boosts allocations for the plantation sector, led by hikes for tea

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

The plantation sector, comprising tea, coffee, rubber and spices, has received higher budgetary allocation for 2025-2026.

While the tea sector has been allocated ₹771 crore as against ₹500 crore in the Revised Estimates for 2024-2025, the Coffee Board has been granted ₹280 crore from ₹250 crore in 2024-2025.

The Rubber Board has been granted ₹360 crore, compared to ₹348 crore this year, while the Spices Board has been allocated ₹153.81 crore from ₹130 crore in 2024-25.

A Tea Board official said the allocation hike for tea was mainly for the Pradhan Mantri Cha Shramik Protsahan Yojana scheme that would benefit women plantation workers and children, mainly in West Bengal and Assam.

There is a slight hike in allocation for all the four plantation segments and no other specific major announcement for the plantation segment, said a source in the sector.

LONDON

Starmer hails 'real progress' on U.K.-Germany ties at Scholz talks

GETTY IMAGES

Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Sunday hailed "real progress" in the U.K.'s relationship with Germany as he hosted Chancellor Olaf Scholz for talks, with Ukraine high on the agenda. Mr. Starmer will become the first U.K. premier since Brexit to attend a European Council gathering as part of his reset of relations with Europe. AFP

RIYADH

New Syria leader meets Saudi crown prince on first foreign visit

AP

Syria's interim President Muhammed al-Jolani [Ahmed al-Sharaa] met with Saudi crown prince and de facto ruler Mohammed bin Salman on Sunday during his first trip abroad since taking power. Syrian regime is counting on Gulf countries for the reconstruction of their war-ravaged nation and revive its economy. AFP

TEHRAN

Iran unveils new ballistic missile that can travel upto 1,700 km

REUTERS

Iran revealed its new ballistic missile, Etemad, that can travel 1,700 km, unveiling it at an event attended by President Masoud Pezeshkian. Three domestically produced satellites were also presented at the ceremony: a 34-kg communications model called Navak, as well as updated versions of the Pars-1 and Pars-2. AFP

TOKYO

Japan launches a navigation satellite on a new flagship rocket

AP

Japan's space agency said on Sunday it successfully launched a navigation satellite on its new flagship H3 rocket as the country seeks to have a more precise location positioning system of its own. The H3 rocket carrying the Michibiki 6 satellite lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Center on a southwestern Japanese island. AP

Fentanyl is U.S. problem, says China as it denounces tariffs

Beijing to challenge Trump's tariff at the WTO and take 'countermeasures' in response; China says it has carried out extensive anti-narcotics cooperation with the U.S. and achieved results

Reuters
BEIJING

China's government on Sunday denounced the Trump administration's imposition of a long-threatened 10% tariff on Chinese imports while leaving the door open for talks with the U.S. that could avoid a deepening conflict.

Beijing will challenge President Donald Trump's tariff at the World Trade Organization and take unspecified "countermeasures" in response to the levy, which takes effect on Tuesday, the Finance and Commerce ministries said.

The response stopped short of the immediate escalation that had marked China's trade showdown with Mr. Trump in his first term as President.

Same rulebook: Beijing had previously filed lawsuits at the WTO against EU's tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles. REUTERS

China's Commerce Ministry said in a statement that Mr. Trump's move "seriously violates" international trade rules, urging the U.S. to "engage in frank dialogue and strengthen cooperation".

Filing a lawsuit with the WTO would be a largely symbolic move that Beijing has also taken against tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles by the European Union.

China's sharpest pushback on Sunday was over fentanyl, an area where the administration of Mr. Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden, had also been urging Beijing to crack down on shipments of the China-made precursor chemicals needed to manufacture the drug.

"Fentanyl is America's problem," China's Foreign Ministry said. "The Chinese side has carried out extensive anti-narcotics cooperation with the United States and achieved remarkable results."

EU vows to 'respond firmly' if targeted

Agence France-Presse
BRUSSELS

The European Union on Sunday blasted U.S. President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China, and said the 27-nation bloc would hit back "firmly" if targeted.

"The European Union regrets the U.S. decision to impose tariffs on Canada, Mexico, and China," said a spokesman for the European Commission.

"Tariffs create unnecessary economic disruption and drive inflation. They are hurtful to all sides."

The spokesman said "the EU would respond firmly to any trading partner that unfairly or arbitrarily imposes tariffs on EU goods".

Rubio in Panama for talks as Trump seeks return of Canal

Associated Press
PANAMA CITY

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is meeting Panama's President on Sunday on the opening stop of his first foreign trip as America's top diplomat as President Donald Trump increases the pressure on Washington's neighbours and allies, including a demand for the Panama Canal to be returned to the U.S.

A day after Mr. Trump announced he was imposing major tariffs on Canada and Mexico, Mr. Rubio was set for perhaps a less confrontational and more diplomatic approach. After talks with President José Raúl Mulino, Mr. Rubio planned to tour an energy facility and then the canal, the object of Mr. Trump's intense interest.

Sovereignty test: Panama has said there will be no negotiation with the U.S. over ownership of the canal. AFP

Mr. Mulino has said there will be no negotiation with the U.S. over ownership of the canal, and some Panamanians have staged protests over Mr. Trump's plans. Mr. Mulino said he hoped Mr. Rubio's visit would focus on shared interests such as migration and combating drug trafficking.

Mr. Rubio will be pressing Mr. Trump's top focus – curbing illegal immigration – but has also said he will be bringing the message that the U.S. wants to reclaim control over the Panama Canal despite intense resistance from regional leaders to combat China's growing influence in the hemisphere.

Two killed, buildings destroyed in West Bank

Agence France-Presse
JENIN

The Israeli military said it had destroyed "several buildings" on Sunday in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin, where it has been conducting a major offensive "targeting militants".

Palestinian official news agency WAFA said Israeli forces "simultaneously detonated about 20 buildings" in the eastern part of Jenin refugee camp

The Palestinian Health Ministry meanwhile said that the Israeli military killed two individuals in separate incidents of Israeli gunfire in the West Bank on Sunday.

Netanyahu to discuss 'Hamas victory' with Trump on U.S. visit

Associated Press
TEL AVIV

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday he will discuss "victory over Hamas," countering Iran and expanding diplomatic relations with Arab countries in his meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump.

Tuesday's meeting at the White House will be Mr. Trump's first with a foreign leader since returning to office. It comes as U.S. and Arab mediators begin the daunting work of brokering the next phase of a ceasefire agreement to wind down the 15-month war in Gaza.

Benjamin Netanyahu

In a statement ahead of his departure, Mr. Netanyahu said he and Mr. Trump would discuss "victory over Hamas, achieving the release of all our hostages and dealing with the Iranian terror axis in all its components," referring to Iran's alliance of militant groups across the region, including Hamas.

Moscow, Kyiv trade blame over boarding school attack

Associated Press
KYIV

Competing claims emerged over a deadly attack on a boarding school in Sudzha, a city in Russia's Kursk region that has been under Ukrainian control for five months.

Ukraine said on Saturday night that four persons were killed when Moscow bombed the boarding school where civilians were sheltering.

Russia claimed in the early hours of Sunday that it was Ukrainian forces that had launched a missile strike on the school, saying that the missiles were launched from Ukraine's Sumy region.

U.K. to introduce laws against AI tools used to generate sexual abuse images

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Britain will become the first country to introduce laws against AI tools used to generate sexual abuse images, the government announced late on Saturday.

The government will make it illegal to possess, create or distribute AI tools designed to generate sexualised images of children, punishable by up to five years in prison, interior minister Yvette Cooper revealed.

It will also be illegal to possess AI "paedophile manuals" which teach people how to use AI to sexually abuse children, punishable by up to three years in prison, she said.

The U.K. government will make it illegal to create or distribute AI tools designed to generate sexualised images of children. FILE PHOTO

"This is a real disturbing phenomenon. Online child sexual abuse material is growing, but also the grooming of children and teenagers online. And what's now happening is that AI is putting this on steroids," Interior Minister Yvette Cooper told *Sky News* on Sunday.

She said AI tools were making it easier for perpetrators "to groom children, and it's also meaning that they are manipulating images of children and then using them to draw and to blackmail young people into further abuse. "It's just the most vile of crimes," she added.

The new law would include banning "some of the AI models being used for child abuse," the Minister said. "Other countries are not yet doing this, but I hope everyone else will follow," she added.

The new laws will also criminalise "predators who run websites designed for other paedophiles to share vile child sexual abuse content or advice on how to groom children," punishable by up to ten years in prison, said the government.

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BREAKING BARRIERS

Heartening to see the effort of the India u-19 players: Laxman

ICC

V.V.S. Laxman expressed delight at the manner in which the Indians performed to successfully defend the ICC Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup title. "It was heartening to see players, coaching, support staff put in the kind of effort which geared them up to overcome any challenge and make this result possible," he wrote on X.

FLAWLESS CAMPAIGN

A golden generation has arrived: Mithali on India u-19's triumph

ICC

Former India skipper Mithali Raj hailed the u-19 women's team's triumph, terming it the "arrival of the golden generation." "Unstoppable, unmatched, unbeaten... India didn't just win the women's T20 World Cup, they dominated it. A flawless campaign capped with a one-sided final win over South Africa".

BRIGHT FUTURE

Women's cricket in India has come a long way, says Ganguly

ICC

Former BCCI president Sourav Ganguly hailed the growth of women's cricket in India . "Heartiest congratulations to the under-19 women's team . Women's cricket in India has come a long way in the last six years with so much investment and support of BCCI. It will continue to grow stronger," he stated.

BONANZA

BCCI announces cash award of ₹5 crore to victorious team

ICC

The BCCI lauded the u-19 team for the memorable run. "A second straight World Cup triumph speaks volumes about India's depth of talent. The Board remains fully committed to ensuring that Indian cricket continues to thrive at all levels," the BCCI said. It also announced a cash award of ₹5 crore to the team.

India caps dream run with emphatic victory over South Africa in the summit clash

Trisha stars with both ball and bat to help the side retain title; spinners Vaishnavi, Aayushi, & Parunika chip in with vital strikes; the Proteas fail to get going after opting to bat

Up, up & above: India emerged champion with an unbeaten record, winning all seven matches. X@ICC

U-19 WOMEN'S WC

Press Trust of India
KUALA LUMPUR

A dominant India flaunted its embarrassment of riches to win a second successive U-19 Women's T20 World Cup with a thumping nine-wicket victory over South Africa here on Sunday.

Having outclassed every team during its march to the final, India asserted itself yet again, getting the job done with as many as 52 balls to spare while also becoming the first team to win the tournament without dropping a single game.

The star of the day was all-rounder G. Trisha, who complemented her three for 15 with an unbeaten 33-ball 44.

South Africa, led by Kayla Reyneke, opted to bat but the decision backfired quickly as India's three-pronged spin attack bowled it out for 82.

Left-arm spinner Aayushi Shukla returned figures of 4-2-9-2, while Trisha further underlined her all-round capabilities scalping three with her leg-spinners.

Trisha once again anchored India's chase with a knock that was studded with eight fours. Vice-captain Sanika Chalke (26 n.o., 22b, 4x4) sealed the victory with a powerful heave to the square-leg boundary, as the Indian players, draped in the tricolour, erupted in joy.

Left-arm spinner Parunika Sisodia (4-0-6-2) provided India with an immediate breakthrough, dismissing opener Simone Lourens for a duck as South Africa struggled from the outset.

Seamer Shabnam Shakil (2-0-7-1) then removed the dangerous Jemma Botha for 16, reducing South Africa to 20 for two by the end of the fourth over.

The pressure intensified when Aayushi bowled Diara Ramlakan.

At the halfway mark, South Africa was struggling at 33 for three, unable to gain any momentum.

Reyneke (7) tried to stabilise the innings but fell to Trisha. Mieke van Voorst (23) and Fay Cowling (15) added 30 for the sixth wicket.

South Africa was precariously placed at 58 for five in 16 overs.

Trisha had van Voorst stumped and the Proteas were bowled out off the final delivery of their innings.

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA
Jemma Botha c Kamalini b Shabnam 16 (*14b, 3x4*), Simone Lourens b Parunika 0 (*3b*), Diara Ramlakan b Aayushi 3 (*8b*), Kayla Reyneke c Parunika b Trisha 7 (*21b*), Karabo Meso b Aayushi 10 (*26b, 1x4*), Mieke van Voorst st. Kamalini b Trisha 23 (*18b, 3x4*), Fay Cowling b Vaishnavi 15 (*20b, 1x6*), Seshnie Naidu b Trisha 0 (*1b*), Ashleigh van Wyk c Vaishnavi *b* Parunika 0 (*3b*), Monalisa Legodi b Vaishnavi 0 (*2b*), Nthabiseng Nini (not out) 2 (*4b*); Extras (lb-5, w-1): 6; Total (in 20 overs): 82.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-11 (Lourens, 1.6), 2-20 (Botha, 3.6), 3-20 (Ramlakan, 4.1), 4-40 (Reyneke, 11.4), 5-44 (Meso, 12.4), 6-74 (van Voorst, 17.5), 7-74 (Seshnie, 17.6), 8-80 (Cowling, 18.3), 9-80 (Legodi, 18.5).

INDIA BOWLING
Joshitha 2-0-17-0, Parunika 4-0-6-2, Shabnam 2-0-7-1, Aayushi 4-2-9-2, Vaishnavi 4-0-23-2, Trisha 4-0-15-3.

INDIA
G. Kamalini c Lourens b Reyneke 8 (*13b, 1x4*), G. Trisha (not out) 44 (*33b, 8x4*), Sanika Chalke (not out) 26 (*22b, 4x4*); Extras (lb-1, w-5): 6; Total (for one wkt. in 11.2 overs): 84.

FALL OF WICKET
1-36 (Kamalini, 4.3).

SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING
Nini 1-0-7-0, Cowling 2-0-19-0, Reyneke 4-1-14-1, Seshnie 1-0-12-0, van Wyk 1-0-12-0, Legodi 1.2-0-10-0, Botha 1-0-9-0.

Toss: South Africa.
PoM: Trisha.
PoS: Trisha.

Incredible achievement

Immensely proud of our Nari Shakti! This victory is the result of excellent teamwork as well as determination and grit. It will inspire several upcoming athletes

PM NARENDRA MODI

From the first game to the final, our team played like true champions. Winning is special, but defending a title takes something extraordinary

SACHIN TENDULKAR

They are well ahead of any other team in their development, skill and awareness. Future is so bright for Indian women's cricket

IAN BISHOP

An incredible achievement

RISHABH PANT

If you want to know what dominating a tournament means look at what our U19 women's cricket team has just achieved. Played at a different level to everyone else

HARSHA BHOGLE

Abhishek blitz blows away England in finale as India wins series 4-1

ENGLAND IN INDIA

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Unstoppable: Abhishek's sizzling show in the fifth T20I — he smashed a 54-ball 135 with seven fours and 13 sixes — underlined India's dominant display. EMMANUAL YOGINI

The series in the bag. A boisterous crowd at the Wankhede Stadium was behind the team. It perhaps resulted in a fitting trigger for Abhishek Sharma who single-handedly blew England away with a blitzkrieg that shattered a plethora of records and set up a crushing win to help India end the T20I season on a perfect note.

Riding on Abhishek's 135 (54b, 7x4, 13x6), India's highest individual score in T20Is, the Men in Blue piled on 247 for nine in 20 overs after being sent in to bat.

As it happens most often while chasing gargantuan targets, England wilted under pressure to be bowled out for a paltry 97 in the 11th over to hand India a 150-run win.

The victory meant Suryakumar Yadav's men grabbed the trophy, with the series ending 4-1 in the host's favour.

It was an Abhishek show all through the first half after he and Sanju Samson walked out to open. While Samson set the tone by clearing deep square-leg off the first ball of the match, Abhishek – by his standards – took his time. Soon after Samson holed out to the deep square-leg fielder for the fifth straight time, he charged down the wicket for his first boundary in the third over.

Onslaught

From that point till he perished towards the end of the innings, Abhishek's onslaught made England fielders remain mere spectators. The aggressive opener was in a mood to display his range-hitting skills and managed to clear the ropes a whopping 13 times – the most by an Indian in a T20I, four of them coming in the fifth over off Jamie Overton.

That over meant India raced to 95 for one in the PowerPlay, its highest in the first six-over period of a T20I. Abhishek blew a kiss to his mother and sister in the gallery as he celebrated his 17-ball fifty.

So shaken was the England bowling attack that it had nothing to fall back on. When they bowled in his arc, Abhishek swung the pacers and leg-spinner Adil Rashid out of the park. When they bowled it short, he pulled it with aplomb. The best of the lot was a lofted cover drive off Brydon Carse that sailed over the cover fence in the ninth over. Carse, however, finished with three wickets through some good pace variations.

Even though he kept losing partners at the other end, by the time the mandatory time-out was called after 10 overs, Abhishek was one run shy of becoming India's second-fastest centurion and the total read 143 for two. Abhishek tapped one on the off-side for a rare single to acknowledge a standing ovation.

Shivam Dube then played a cameo as India ensured that the latter half was a mere formality. It turned out to be the same as India finished the game off in the 11th over. Apart from Phil Salt, who scored an impressive fifty, only Jacob Bethell managed to get into double digits.

Samson injured his finger when he tried to fend off a short-ball from Archer in the first over. In his absence, Dhruv Jurel took three catches, including one down the leg off Mark Wood's inside edge to hand Mohammed Shami his third wicket, and the Men in Blue a crushing win.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA
Sanju Samson c Archer b Wood 16 (*7b, 1x4, 2x6*), Abhishek Sharma c Archer b Rashid 135 (*54b, 7x4, 13x6*), Tilak Varma c Salt b Carse 24 (*15b, 3x4, 1x6*), Suryakumar Yadav c Salt b Carse 2 (*3b*), Shivam Dube c Rashid b Carse 30 (*13b, 3x4, 2x6*), Hardik Pandya c Livingstone b Wood 9 (*6b, 1x6*), Rinku Singh lbw b Archer 9 (*6b, 1x4*), Axar Patel run out 15 (*11b, 2x4*), Mohammed Shami (not out) 0 (*4b*), Ravi Bishnoi c Carse b Overton 0 (*1b*); Extras (lb-4, w-3): 7; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 247.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-21 (Samson, 1.5 overs), 2-136 (Tilak, 8.6), 3-145 (Suryakumar, 10.2), 4-182 (Dube, 13.2), 5-193 (Hardik, 14.4), 6-202 (Rinku, 15.5), 7-237 (Abhishek, 17.6), 8-247 (Axar, 10.5), 9-247 (Bishnoi, 19.6).

ENGLAND BOWLING
Archer 4-0-55-1, Wood 4-0-32-2, Overton 3-0-48-1, Livingstone 2-0-29-0, Rashid 3-0-41-1, Carse 4-0-38-3.

ENGLAND
Phil Salt c sub (Jurel) b Dube 55 (*23b, 7x4, 3x6*), Ben Duckett c Abhishek b Shami 0 (*1b*), Jos Buttler c Tilak b Varun 7 (*7b, 1x4*), Harry Brook c Varun b Bishnoi 2 (*4b*), Liam Livingstone c Rinku b Varun 9 (*5b, 2x4*), Jacob Bethell b Dube 10 (*7b, 1x6*), Brydon Carse c Varun b Abhishek 3 (*4b*), Jamie Overton c Suryakumar b Abhishek 1 (*3b*), Jofra Archer (not out) 1 (*2b*), Adil Rashid c sub (Jurel) b Shami 6 (*6b, 1x4*), Mark Wood c sub (Jurel) b Shami 0 (*1b*); Extras (lb-1, w-2): 3; Total (in 10.3 overs): 97.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-23 (Duckett, 2.1), 2-48 (Buttler, 4.1), 3-59 (Brook, 5.2), 4-68 (Livingstone, 6.1), 5-82 (Salt, 7.1), 6-87 (Carse, 8.1), 7-90 (Overton, 8.5), 8-90 (Bethell, 9.1), 9-97 (Rashid, 10.2).

INDIA BOWLING
Shami 2.3-0-25-3, Hardik 2-0-23-0, Varun 2-0-25-2, Bishnoi 1-0-9-1, Dube 2-0-11-2, Abhishek 1-0-3-2.

Toss: England.
PoM: Abhishek.
PoS: Varun.
India won by 150 runs to clinch the five-match series 4-1.
Next match:
First ODI: February 6, Nagpur, 1.30 p.m.

Smaran slams ton, helps Karnataka salvage a draw

The southpaw continues his good run, picks third straight hundred across formats; home team exits after finishing fourth in points table; Haryana tops Group C, storms into the quarterfinals

RANJI TROPHY

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

R. Smaran continued his great run to help Karnataka salvage a draw against Haryana in their last Ranji Trophy Elite Group 'C' match at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Sunday.

Smaran struck a fine unbeaten 134 to halt Haryana's march. This was the southpaw's third straight hundred across formats, after a 203 against Punjab in the previous First Class match and a 101-run knock in the Vijay Hazare Trophy final.

The 21-year-old showed tremendous patience in his 218-ball stint, even as Haryana threatened to make major inroads.

On the back of gaining the first innings lead, Haryana (29 points) finished on top of the table ahead of Kerala (28 points). Karnataka (20 points), which needed to win with a bonus point here to qualify for the knockouts, ended in fourth spot and exited the competition.

Resuming on 108 for three, Karnataka's first task was to erase the overall deficit of 38 runs. The going got tough when Devdutt Padikkal (43) and K. L. Shrijith (2) were dismissed by wily pacer Anshul Kamboj inside the first hour of the day. Yashovardhan Parantap (12) was trapped leg-before by Jayant, reducing Karnataka to 164 for six.

Hot streak: Smaran's century kept Haryana at bay. K. MURALI KUMAR

Smaran was joined at the crease by Hardik Raj (40, 78b, 4x4), who showed the stomach for a fight. The last recognised pair dug in, aware that another reverse could lead to a quick collapse and defeat.

Hardik and Smaran put on a crucial 98-run stand for the seventh wicket, and gave the home team ample breathing space. By the time Jayant Yadav prised out Hardik, Karnataka moved to safety with a 116-run lead.

Smaran, meanwhile, held firm. Haryana, resigned to a draw, brought on part-timers Lakshya Dalal and Dheeru Singh. At Tea, the teams shook hands and agreed to a stalemate.

The scores:

Karnataka - 1st innings: 304

Haryana - 1st innings: 450

Karnataka - 2nd innings: K.V. Aneesh b Kamboj 4, Mayank Agarwal b Chahal 6, K.L. Rahul b Thakral 43, Devdutt Padikkal lbw b Kamboj 43, R. Smaran (not out) 134, K.L. Shrijith c Yuvraj b Kamboj 2, Yashovardhan Parantap lbw b Jayant 12, Hardik Raj lbw b Jayant 40, Prasidh Krishna c Dheeru b Thakral 1; V. Koushik (not out) 1; Extras (w-1, b-6, lb-2): 9; Total (for eight wkts. in 90 overs) 295.

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-30, 3-87, 4-127, 5-129, 6-164, 7-262, 8-267.

Haryana bowling: Kamboj 16-4-40-3, Chahal 19-0-71-1, Thakral 18-1-70-2, Jayant 27-2-62-2, Sindhu 8-0-38-0, Dalal 1-0-5-0, Dheeru 1-0-1-0.

Coach Goud hopes to get quality spinners into the Karnataka fold next season

Achal Ashwin
BENGALURU

A rained-out fixture against Kerala earlier in the Ranji Trophy campaign cost Karnataka crucial points. Bad luck notwithstanding, there were a few on-field concerns which robbed Karnataka of a spot in the knockout rounds.

The spin department wears a fairly depleted look. After trying several young tweakers in the previous season, Karnataka went back to the experienced Shreyas Gopal. Off-spinner Mohsin Khan and left-arm spinner Hardik Raj played second fiddle, but all things told, it was left to the strong pace line-up to shoulder the bowling responsibilities.

Karnataka coach Yere Goud explained that if Karnataka gets quality spinners into the fold next season, the results could be better. "If you look at the top 15-20 wicket-takers in the Ranji Trophy, there are around 12-13 spinners. In the early part of the tournament, because of the conditions, our seamers played a major role. As the tournament progresses, spinners come into play. For Karnataka to progress, the spinners have to come into play. If we are able to cover that area in the next year, we have a good chance of doing well," Goud said after Karnataka's season ended with a draw against Haryana here on Sunday.

"Look at the teams which have qualified for the knockouts - they all have spinners who have taken lots of wickets. This reduces the load on fast bowlers. We are heavily dependent on fast bowlers to do the job," Goud said.

The former Karnataka batter laid special emphasis on finding a left-arm spinner who can choke the run flow.

Goud believes that K.L. Shrijith's batting ability makes him the ideal candidate for a long-term wicketkeeper-batter. "Shrijith got a hundred in his Ranji Trophy debut, and a hundred against Mumbai in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. Modern wicketkeepers have to contribute with the bat. This is where Shrijith has done well," Goud said.

LIVE TELECAST

I-League: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 4.30 & 7 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-3 & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: gxr.world, 1.15 a.m. (Tuesday)
LaLiga: gxr.world, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Final Ranji Points Table

Elite: Group A

	M	W	L	D	NR	Bonus Pts	Total Pts	Quotient
J & K (Q)	7	5	0	2	0	1	35	1.576
Mumbai (Q)	7	4	2	1	0	2	29	1.744
Baroda	7	4	2	1	0	2	27	1.173
Services	7	3	3	1	0	2	23	0.863
Odisha	7	2	3	1	1	1	17	0.714
Maharashtra	7	2	3	2	0	1	17	1.063
Tripura	7	1	1	4	1	1	14	1.233
Meghalaya	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	0.343

Group B

	M	W	L	D	NR	Bonus Pts	PTS	Quotient
Vidarbha (Q)	7	6	0	1	0	1	40	1.490
Gujarat (Q)	7	4	0	3	0	1	32	1.147
Himachal	7	3	4	0	0	3	21	1.014
Hyderabad	7	2	3	2	0	2	16	1.223
Rajasthan	7	1	2	4	0	0	16	1.000
Andhra	7	1	3	3	0	0	13	0.946
Uttarakhand	7	1	3	3	0	0	11	0.617
Pondicherry	7	0	3	4	0	0	6	0.782

Group C

	M	W	L	D	NR	Bonus Pts	PTS	Quotient
Haryana (Q)	7	3	0	4	0	1	29	1.212
Kerala (Q)	7	3	0	4	0	2	28	1.813
Bengal	7	2	1	3	1	1	21	1.175
Karnataka	7	2	0	5	0	1	20	1.194
Madhya Pradesh	7	1	1	5	0	1	14	1.157
Uttar Pradesh	7	1	1	5	0	1	14	0.988
Punjab	7	1	4	2	0	1	11	0.826
Bihar	7	0	6	0	1	0	1	0.337

Group D

	M	W	L	D	NR	Bonus Pts	PTS	Quotient
Saurashtra (Q)	7	3	2	2	0	3	25	1.248
Tamil Nadu (Q)	7	3	1	3	0	2	25	1.670
Chandigarh	7	4	3	0	0	1	25	0.982
Delhi	7	2	2	3	0	2	21	0.871
Jharkhand	7	2	1	4	0	0	20	0.921
Railways	7	2	2	3	0	0	17	0.849
Chhattisgarh	7	0	2	5	0	0	11	1.109
Assam	7	0	3	4	0	0	6	0.624

* In Group D, with the points being equal for the top three, the number of bonus points earned was the tie-breaker

Q: Qualified

THE KNOCKOUT PHASE

FEBRUARY 8-12
QF1: J & K vs Kerala (Pune)
QF2: Vidarbha vs TN (Nagpur)
QF3: Haryana vs Mumbai (Lahli)
QF4: Saurashtra vs Gujarat (Rajkot)

FEBRUARY 17-21
SF1: Winner of QF1 vs Winner of QF4
SF2: Winner of QF2 vs Winner of QF3

FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 2: FINAL

SNAPSHOTS

Schniederjans crowned champion

NEW DELHI: It was a brilliantly consistent fare from Ollie Schniederjans as he wound up with a 10-under 178, and beat fellow American and two-time Major champion Bryson DeChambeau by four shots, in the International Series golf championship in New Delhi on Sunday. The 31-year-oldhad rounds of 71, 69, 69, 69 over the four days. Among the Indians, Anirban Lahiri returned his best score of 4-under 68 for the day, and finished joint 10th with a 2-over 290, collecting $32,083 for his effort. Gaganjeet Bhullar was joint 24th, and pocketed $17,950. Two-time Major champion, the former World No.1 for 331 weeks, Greg Norman, who had won 88 pro titles, enlivened the trophy presentation with his presence.

Praaggnandhaa and Gukesh in joint lead

WIJK AAN ZEE: World champion D. Gukesh played out a draw with Jorden van Foreest of Holland while Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa beat Alexey Sarana of Serbia as the two Indians shared the lead after a thrilling day at the Tata Steel Masters.

12th round results: Masters: Arjun Erigaisi (4.5) bt Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 7.5); Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 5) drew with D. Gukesh (8.5); Wei Yi (Chn, 6.5) drew with Anish Giri (Ned, 6.5); Leon Luke Mendonca (4.5) drew with Fabiano Caruana (USA, 6); R. Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 8.5) bt Alexey Sarana (Srb, 5.5); P. Harikrishna (Ind, 6) drew with Vincent Keymer (Ger, 5); Max Warmerdam (Ned, 3.5) lost to Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 7).
Challengers: Nodirbek Yakubboev (Uzb, 7) bt Arthur Pijpers (Ned, 5); Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 3) lost to Benjamin Bok (Ned, 8); Nguyen Thai Dai Van (Cze, 8.5) bt Irina Bulmaga (Rom, 1); Aydin Suleymanli (Aze, 8.5) bt Svane Frederik (Ger, 7); Ediz Gurel (Tur, 7) bt R. Vaishali (5); Erwin L'Ami (Ned, 8.5) drew with Nogerbek Kazybek (Kaz, 6.5); Oro Faustino (Arg, 3.5) bt Lu MIaoyi (Chn, 5.5).

Arnav scalps five

BENGALURU: Arnav Gupta starred for Gopalan International School (5/6) as it thrashed National Public School (Kengeri) by 10 wickets in the B.T. Ramaiah Shield U-14 third division tournament.
The scores: NPS, Kengeri 34 in 18.4 overs (Arnav Gupta 5/6) lost to Gopalan IS 35 for no loss in seven overs.
Treamis 143 in 29 overs (Maulik Mehta 73, Ashith Rajiv Kolla 29, Ayush Bharadwaj 3/32) lost to National Hill View PS 144/2 in 23 overs (K. Hrishikesh 42 n.o., S. Samarth 49 n.o.).
SFS Academy 138/8 in 27 overs (Karthik 33 n.o., Bhavish 3/25) bt National Hill View PS 134/7 in 27 overs (Lakshya Chandana 44).
Euro School, Whitefield 126/4 in 14 overs (Rajveer Kumar 43, Abhav 37) bt KLE Society's School, Rajajinagar 100/7 in 14 overs (Kushanand 39, Tharun 3/12).
Airaa Academy 27 in 12.3 overs lost to Sri Sri Ravishankar Vidya Mandir, Bangalore East 28/2 in 3.5 overs; Vibgyor High, Kadugodi 182/9 in 29 overs (Aadyot Dubey 44, Sachit 46, Devansh 5/23) lost to National Academy for Learning 183/3 in 27 overs (Aarav 27, Rajveer 81).
New Baldwin IRS [B-106] 76 in 21 overs (Pratham Bhat 3/7) lost to New Horizon Gurukul [B-103] 80/4 in 10.1 overs.
Carmel HS [B-79] 135/9 in 30 overs (Bhavin Joe 42, Vishruth 43, Shamanth K.C. Raju 3/14) bt Dev In National School [B-79] 121 in 29 overs (Shamanth K.C. Raju 78, Shashank 4/25); Nagarjuna Vidyaniketan, Yelahanka 66 in 23.3 overs (Rishaan 3/11, Aryan 3/8) lost to Presidency School, South 67/6 in 23.5 overs.
Deccan IS 60/8 in 15 overs lost to DPS, Whitefield 61/1 in 6.4 overs (Adit 27) [Match reduced to 15 overs because of wet outfield].
DPS, East 77/2 in 12 overs (Vedant 40) bt Air Force School, ASTE 74/6 in 12 overs (Swayam 30, Arnav 27, Ameya P. Nayak 3/7) [Match reduced to 12 overs because of wet outfield].
Vyasa IS 105/5 in 20 overs (Vinamruth 27, Ruchith 3/17) lost to Nurture IS 106/6 in 19 overs (Shubhan 43) [Match reduced to 12 overs because of wet outfield].

RANJI SCORES – ROUND SEVEN (FOURTH & FINAL DAY)

Elite: Group A: Cuttack: Odisha 180 & 394 lost to Services 199 & 376/0 in 85.4 overs (Suraj Vashisht 154 n.o., Shubham Rohilla 209 n.o.). **Points: Services 7, Odisha 0.**

Vadodara: Jammu & Kashmir 246 & 284 in 106.4 overs (Shubham Khajuria 94, Kanhaiya Wadhawan 84) bt Baroda 166 & 182 in 54.5 overs (Vishnu Solanki 42, Sahil Lotra 7/75). **J & K 6, Baroda 0.**

Solapur: Tripura 270 & 310/5 decl. in 86 overs (Sridam Paul 128, Mandeep Singh 77 n.o.) drew with Maharashtra 418. **Maharashtra 3, Tripura 1.**

Group B: Nagpur: Vidarbha 190 & 355 bt Hyderabad 326 & 161 in 38.5 overs (Rahul Radesh 48, Harsh Dubey 6/57). **Vidarbha 6, Hyderabad 0.**

Puducherry: Pondicherry 427 & 201/8 in 65.5 overs (Akash Kargave 89) drew with Uttarakhand 273. **Pondicherry 3, Uttarakhand 1.**

Dazzling duo: Rohilla and Vashisht's 376-run unbroken opening stand is the highest fourth-innings total without losing a wicket in First Class cricket. @BCCIDOMESTIC

Group C: Bengaluru: Karnataka 304 & 294/8 in 89.5 overs (K.L. Rahul 43, Devdutt Padikkal 43, R. Smaran 133 n.o., Hardik Raj 40) drew with Haryana 450. **Haryana 3, Karnataka 1.**

Indore: Madhya Pradesh 670/7 decl. & 28/0 in three overs drew with Uttar Pradesh 611 in 164 overs (Abhishek Goswami 186, Madhav Kaushik 80, Aryan Juyal 138, Aaditya Sharma 66, Saurabh Kumar 41, Saransh Jain 5/138). **MP 3, UP 1.**

Group D: Raipur: Chandigarh 283 & 299 in 78.2 overs (Mayank Sidhu 47, Manan Vohra 54, Amrit Lubana 43 n.o., Ravi Kiran 5/63) bt Chhattisgarh 406 & 122 in 30.1 overs (Aayush Pandey 41, Jagjit Singh 6/51). **Chandigarh 6, Chhattisgarh 0.**

KARNATAKA ROUND-UP

Manvanth helps Karnataka gain lead

All-rounder L. Manvanth Kumar was the star for Karnataka as the host secured a narrow eight-run first-innings lead over Kerala on the second day of the C.K. Nayudu (U-23) Trophy match at the Alur Grounds near Bengaluru on Sunday.

After taking four wickets to help dismiss Kerala for 335, Manvanth, coming in at No.8, scored a crucial half-century (57, 82b, 2x4, 5x6) and was involved in two important partnerships.

He combined with No. 10 Shashi Kumar for 30 runs and another 41 with No. 11 Paras Gurbax Arya as he carried his side ahead of Kerala.

At stumps, the visitor was 43 for no loss.

The scores:

Kerala 327 in 72.5 overs (Omar Abubacker 57, Abhishek J. Nair 31, Ahammed Imran 92, Pavan Sreedhar 39, V. Abijith Praveen 72, M. Kiran Sagar 26, L. Manvanth Kumar 4/56, Shikhar Shetty 5/86) & 43 for no loss in eight overs vs Karnataka 335 in 88.3 overs (Y.R. Monish Reddy 38, K.P. Karthikeya 45, Aneeshwar Gautam 71, Kruthik Krishna 68, Manvanth 57, M.U. Harikrishnan 3/98).

Tanishka, coach Sangam Bailoor and Mihika. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Paddler Tanishka stars

Tanishka Kalbhairav bagged the U-13 singles gold medal and the doubles bronze (with Mihika Udupa) at the 86th Cadet & Sub-junior National Championships in Indore.

The results:

Girls U-13: Singles:

Final: Tanishka Kalbhairav bt Sreosree Chakraborty 11-2, 11-8, 11-6.

Doubles: Semifinal: Pragnya & M. Shaanvi bt Tanishka & Mihika Udupa 14-12, 11-9, 10-12, 11-7.

Who is benefiting from the ATP Challengers in India?

Acton time: The Challenger series began in Chennai on Sunday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

In an otherwise dismal tennis scene in India, one positive in recent years has been the conduct of a handful of ATP, WTA and ITF tournaments. Three States – Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu - have put their best foot forward to help Indian players gain crucial points and move up the rankings.

The results, however, paint a different picture. There has only been one Indian singles winner in 12 Challengers from 2019 - Sumit Nagal in Chennai last year. In the first of four back-to-back Challengers that gets underway in Chennai from Monday, not a single Indian is ranked high enough to gain a direct main draw entry.

World No. 105 Nagal, who breached the top-100 after winning in Chennai, is not playing any of the four competitions and has chosen his beloved clay in South America. Sasikumar Mukund (395), Ramkumar Ramanathan (400) and Karan Singh (500) all had to be given wildcards.

"The level of coaching is not good enough," Prajnesh Gunneswaran, who achieved a career-best ranking of 75, told *The Hindu*. "I won't blame the talent or the potential. Gopi Chand and Rahul Dravid are coaching. It's not that they didn't do well as players and make money. But they have come back. Where is the tennis player of that calibre coaching in India?

"Or hire foreigners, but they will ask thrice the salary, which is basically throwing money at the problem like China. You can hold 50 tournaments, but if your players are not good enough, nobody will win."

Former India Davis Cup coach Zeeshan Ali felt that scheduling has played a part. "Having three or four tournaments in a row attracts a lot of high-ranked foreigners," he said. "It is cost effective for them and they take away a lot of entries."

"It is better to space tournaments out. Maybe have two, give two or three weeks off. Have a couple in hot June instead of pleasant February. You won't have a lot of Americans and Europeans coming."

For the record, ATP discourages one-off events and wants two or more bunched together.

This helps players, regardless of nationality, to manage costs better.

But the unfortunate fallout is like what happened in February, 2023, when Australian Max Purcell entered India ranked 203, swept all three Challengers and exited the country ranked 95.

Trying to ace this tough balancing act is Sunil Yajaman, joint-secretary of Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA), which will organise the Bengaluru Open (February 24 to March 2). The tournament has grown in stature – from 80 ATP points and $7200 for the singles winner in 2022 to 125 and $28,400 in 2025. An Indian winner will be the icing on the cake.

"I hope the law of averages helps," Yajaman quipped. "In Bangalore, we have had two Indian winners in eight years (Nagal in 2017 and Prajnesh 2018), which is decent. That said, it's a great opportunity, and if they prepare slightly better and differently, I am sure they will do well."

Rampant India completes formalities in quick time, seals World Group 1 spot

After Sriram and Rithvik coast to a win in the doubles, Karan makes an impressive debut with victory over Togo's Hod'abalo; the visiting team's players fail to put a fight as the host wins 4-0

DAVIS CUP

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

India completed the formalities in quick time, claiming the doubles match to take an unassailable lead in its Davis Cup tie against Togo and seal its place in the World Group 1 at the DLTA Stadium here on Sunday.

Karan Singh then made his Davis Cup debut with a fighting 6-2, 6-3 victory against Hod'abalo Isak Padio to wrap up the tie 4-0.

N. Sriram Balaji and Rithvik Choudary Bollipalli won 6-2, 6-1 in 57 minutes against the late pairing of M'lapa Tingou Akomlo and Padio, the former stepping in as a replacement for Thomas Setodji, Togo's best player but struggling with an arm injury that saw him put up a below-par performance in his singles game on Saturday.

Dominant show: Sriram, right, and Rithvik sealed the tie for India. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Rithvik steps up

Led by the experienced Sriram, who lost just one point on his serve through the match, and buoyed by the constantly improving serve of Rithvik, the Indians were in control all the time, continuing from where the singles left off on Day One.

In contrast, while Padio, the youngest in the Togo team, largely responsible for giving a semblance of fightback, Akomlo was erratic, both with his serves and his returns.

The Indians got their first break when Akomlo served in the fourth game, hitting one over the baseline to go ahead 3-1.

It soon became 5-2 before Akomlo handed over game eight and the set to India with two consecutive double faults.

The second set was more of the same, India racing to 5-1 before Bollipalli, serving for the match, finished it off with an ace.

Later Karan, stepping in to play the reverse singles, started strongly to justify the team's faith in him, winning in an hour and 12 minutes against Padio.

Long rallies

The two youngsters put up the best competition of the tie, Padio constantly engaging Karan in long rallies and mixing his shots to keep the Indian alert.

He, however, eventually paid the price for his inability to control the pace and angle of his shots, repeatedly hitting wide and over to cede control.

After winning the first set 6-2, Karan raced to a 4-0 lead in the second but Padio finally found his groove, breaking him in the fifth game.

He held his own thereafter before Karan closed out at 6-3 and the fifth dead rubber was called off.

The results:

N. Sriram Balaji & Rithvik Choudary Bollipalli bt M'lapa Tingou Akomlo & Hod'abalo Isak Padio 6-2, 6-1.

Karan Singh bt Hod'abalo Isak Padio 6-2, 6-3.

Arsenal crushes City, closes in on Liverpool

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Arsenal thrashed Manchester City 5-1 on Sunday to cut Liverpool's lead at the top of the Premier League to six points. Martin Odegaard, Thomas Partey, Myles Lewis-Skelly, Kai Havertz and Ethan Nwaneri were on target for the Gunners.

The results: Premier League: Arsenal 5 (Odegaard 2, Partey 56, Lewis-Skelly 62, Havertz 76, Nwaneri 90+3) bt Manchester City 1 (Haaland 55); Manchester United 0 lost to Crystal Palace 2 (Mateta 64, 89); Brentford 0 lost to Tottenham 2 (Janelt 29-og, Sarr 87).

On Saturday: Bournemouth 0 lost to Liverpool 2 (Salah 30-pen, 75); Everton 4 (Doucoure 1, Beto 6, 45+2, Ndiaye 90) bt Leicester 0; Ipswich 1 (Delap 31) lost to Southampton 2 (Aribo 21, Onuachu 87); Newcastle 1 (Murphy 37) lost to Fulham 2 (Jimenez 61, Muniz 82); Nottingham Forest 7 (Dunk 12-og, Gibbs-White 25, Wood 32, 64, 69-pen, Williams 89, Jota 90+2) bt Brighton 0; Wolves 2 (Bellegarde 12, Cunha 90+7) bt Aston Villa 0.

LaLiga: Barcelona 1 (Lewandowski 61) bt Alaves 0; Valencia 2 (Rioja 44, Guerra 68) bt Celta Vigo 1 (Duran 65).

On Saturday: Getafe 0 drew with Sevilla 0; Villarreal 5 (Perez 42, Gueye 64, Comesana 70, Barry 86, Suarez 90+1) bt Valladolid 1 (Amallah 90+4); Atletico Madrid 2 (Lino 26, Griezmann 90+3) bt Mallorca 0; Espanyol 1 (Romero 85) bt Real Madrid 0.

Serie A: Juventus 4 (Kolo Muani 61, 64, Vlahovic 90, Conceicao 90+2) bt Empoli 1 (De Sciglio 4); Fiorentina 2 (Kean 9, Gudmundsson 30) bt Genoa 1 (De Winter 55); AC Milan 1 (Reijnders 45) drew with Inter Milan 1 (de Vrij 90+3).

Punjab men, Tamil Nadu women triumph in basketball

On top: The victorious Tamil Nadu women's team. RITU RAJ KONWAR

NATIONAL GAMES

Stan Rayan
DEHRADUN

Looking stronger with many new coming in, Punjab shocked National champion Tamil Nadu 80-64 and retained the men's basketball title in the National Games at the Maharaja Pratap Sports Complex here on Sunday. Earlier, Tamil Nadu won the women's title, brushing aside defending champion Kerala 79-46.

Tamil Nadu had defeated Punjab comfortably in the recent National final at Bhavnagar, but Sunday was a very different day. The match was close till the first half but Punjab grabbed a 10-point lead in the third quarter and built on it to emerge an easy winner.

"A lot of people were doubting us after the National, no one can doubt us now. At the National, we were not the full team," Punjab captain Amjyot Gill, also the champion's top-scorer, told *The Hindu*.

Tamil Nadu women had also strengthened the side with Railway players for the National Games.

"We have four Railway players in the team," said Dharshini Thirunavukkarasu, the Tamil Nadu captain who was part of the Railways team which won the recent National where she walked away with the Most Valuable Player Award.

Kerala had played a close semifinal against Karnataka on Saturday and appeared a weary lot in the third quarter on a day when it could manage only five points compared to Tamil Nadu's 21.

"After playing a tight semifinal last evening, it was like playing two matches in a day since the final was in the morning," said Kerala coach Jijo Paul.

Volleyball titles for Services and Kerala

Services men and Kerala women won the volleyball titles at Rudrapur beating National champion Kerala and Tamil Nadu respectively.

In swimming, Tamil Nadu's Benediction Rohit bettered his own Games record in the 50m butterfly at Haldwani.

The results: Basketball: Men's final: Punjab 80 (Amjyot Gill 18, Nawaz Singh Panaich 15, Gurbaz Singh 14, Gurwinder Singh 13, Palpreet Singh 10) bt Tamil Nadu 64 (P. Baladhaneshwar 16, Muin Bek 15, Pranav Prince 14, Arvind Kumar 10). **Third place:** Delhi bt Services 63-57.

Women's final: Tamil Nadu 79 (K. Sathya 17, Sathiya Senthilkumar 13, M. Nishanthi 13, Dharshini Thirunavaukkarasu 12) bt Kerala 46 (R. Sreekala 19). **Third place:** Karnataka bt Punjab 77-76.

Swimming (winners only): Men: 400m freestyle: Kushagra Rawat (Del) 3:57.89; **50m butterfly:** Benediction Rohit (TN) 24.39 MR, OR own 24.55; **100m backstroke:** Srihari Natarj (Kar) 56.26.

Women: 1500m freestyle: Bhavya Sachdeva (Del) 17:42.81; **50m butterfly:** Nina Venkatesh (Kar) 28.38; **100m backstroke:** Soubrity Mondal (Ben) 1:06.66.

Volleyball, finals: Men: Services bt Kerala 25-20, 25-22, 19-25, 28-26; Women: Kerala bt Tamil Nadu 25-19, 22-25, 22-25, 25-14, 15-7.

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Lr.No.Mktg.M6/RG Dall/Tenders/2025 Date: 02.02.2025

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

BIDS ARE INVITED FROM THE ELIGIBLE BIDDERS FOR SUPPLY OF 4,500 MTs (± 25%) OF RG DALL IN 1 KG PACKET FORM WITH SECONDARY PACKING IN 50 KG PP BAGS TO ALL THE 251 MLS POINTS OF APSCSCL IN TWENTY SIX(26) DISTRICTS ACROSS THE ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FOR DISTRIBUTION UNDER ICDS AND THR SCHEMES FOR THE MONTHS OF MARCH 2025 TO MAY 2025 THROUGH NCDEX E-MARKETS LIMITED (NEML) AUCTION PLATFORM.

All the interested Suppliers/Contractors in All Over India may visit www.apscscl.in & www.neml.in to view and download tender documents free of cost.

Interested bidders need to register in portal as vendor with NCDEX e Markets Limited to participate in the tenders. **Contact Tel: 9962059599** or **9032429420** or **9885549722** and Email: **askus@neml.in**

Last date for registration and completion of formalities for the e-auction shall be up to **11.02.2025 up to 5 PM** and the tentative date of online e-reverse auction through NCDEX e Markets Limited platform would be **13.02.2025, 11:00 AM** onwards.

Sd/- VC & MANAGING DIRECTOR

TOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL,
CHANNARAYAPATNA, HASSAN DISTRICT
PH.NO: 08176-255411, 254543 email add:
itstaff_ulb_channarayapatna@yahoo.co.in website add :
http://www.channarayapatnatown.mrc.gov.in/

No. TMC/CRP/EE Tender/CR/ 07/2024-25 Date : 31-01-2025

: Short term E-Procurement Tender :

The Chief Officer, TMC, Channarayapatna invites tenders from eligible tenderers, for the development of works detailed in the below. The tenderers may submit the tenders as below. Name of Work: Providing Services of Solid Waste Management labours Such as Drivers, Supervisor, Watchman, Tractor Loaders and Unskilled labours on Out source basis For Town Municipal Council, Channarayapayna Indent No:-DMA/2024-25/SE3409/CALL-2 Eprocurement portal Address (Visit:https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/), Channarayapatna Website Address www.channarayapatnatown.mrc.gov.in. 1] Last date and time for receipt of tenders through E-portal : From 31-01-2025 to 10-02-2025, Time:17.30 P.M 2] Time and date of opening of Technical bid : date: 12-02-2025, time 11.00 A.M Estimate Cost-99.58 L EMD Amount - 2.0 L

sd/- Smt Banashankari
President , TMC
Channarayapatna

sd/- Sri Yathishkumar R K.M.A.S
Chief Officer , TMC
Channarayapatna

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Malleshwaram Branch
No. 31/1, 7th Cross, Sampige Road,
Malleshwaram, Bangalore - 560003
Ph.: 080-23348404

Date: 30.01.2025

NOTICE OF GOLD LOAN AUCTION

The Gold Articles pledged under the following gold loan account numbers at bank's branch Malleshwaram which are not cleared by payment of Bank's dues even after serving registered notice and gold articles pledged under same account numbers against which registered notice have been served / returned undelivered, will be sold in public auction or by private treaty on as is where is condition at Malleshwaram Branch premises as under or any other convenient date and time without further notice at the risk and responsibility of the pawners, if they are not released / renewed from the branch. Auction of gold ornaments pledged under the following accounts will be held at **MALLESHWARAM BRANCH** Bangalore on **15.02.2025** at South Indian Bank Ltd., Malleshwaram, Bangalore at **3:30 p.m.**

Sl. No.	Name of the Account Holder	Account Number	Gross Weight
1	PRANEETH RAJ	0279.653.78922	22.50

Bank reserves right to adjourn / cancel auction at any point of time.

Branch Manager
SIB - Malleshwaram

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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to the public that we are investigating the right, title, interest, benefits,entitlements of whatsoever nature of the respective owners of ground floor and first floor (hereunder written as Item No.1 and Item No.2) of the building constructed on Site No. 473, Binnamangla 1st Stage, Bangalore, presently coming under the purview of BBMP Ward No.80, which are more particularly described in the Schedule hereunder written and hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Schedule Property". Our client ("Client") is desirous of entering into a sale transaction of the Schedule Property with the respective owners of the Schedule Property who have represented to our Client that they are the absolute owners of their respective extents in the Schedule Property with rights of alienation over the same.

ALL persons including an individual, a Hindu Undivided Family, a company, banks, financial institution(s), non- banking financial institution(s), a firm, an association of persons or a body of individuals whether incorporated or not, lenders and/or creditors having any objection, claim, right, title and/or interest in respect of Schedule Property or any part or portion thereof by way of sale, memorandum of understanding, exchange, mortgage, pledge, charge, gift, trust, inheritance, bequest, succession, family arrangement, grant, possession, lease, sub-lease tenancy, sub-tenancy, maintenance easement, license, bequeath, share, assignment, lien, attachment, development rights, covenant, settlement right of way, lis pendens, reservation, agreement, FSI consumption, development rights, order/decree/judgement of court or any liability or commitment or otherwise or demand of any nature whatsoever are hereby requested to inform the same in writing, supported with the original documents, to the undersigned having their office at 6/12, Gurappa Avenue, Primrose Road Bengaluru 560 025 within a period of **10 (Ten) days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons shall be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our Client would be at liberty to proceed with the sale transaction in connection with the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of the property bearing No. 473, situated at Binnamangala 1st Stage, Bangalore and its built up area are as hereunder:

Item No.1

All that residential building on the ground floor with a built up area of 297.289 sq. mtrs. along with nonresidential building on the ground floor with a built up area of 27.8709 sq. mtrs., admeasuring 325.1605 sq. mtrs. constructed on property bearing No. 473, currently under the purview of BBMP limits and identified with PID No. 82-1-473, Hoysalanagar Ward No. 80.

Item No.2

All that residential building on the first floor with a built up area of 211.41 sq. mtrs., constructed on property bearing No. 473, currently under the purview of BBMP limits and identified with PID No. 82-1- 473/1, Hoysalanagar Ward No. 80 along with a portion of passage measuring 624.60 sq. ft. in the eastern side of the ground floor of property bearing No. 473.

And property bearing No. 473 is bounded on the :

East By : Site No. 472; **West By** : Site No. 474;
North By : Road; and **South By** : Site No. 495

Mr. S T Prashantha Kumar, Senior Partner
Mr. B.C. Keerthi Kishore, Practice Head
Fox Mandal & Associates, Solicitors & Advocates,
FM House, 6/12, Primrose Road, Bangalore – 560025, Karnataka, India
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